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The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

Hampton Adams:

Moments of Truth

Robert E. Luccock • At Life's Lifting Places

W. Norman Pittenger • Background of Eternity

George C. Stuart • When You Can't Do Anything

Anderson D. Clark • The Protestant Prodigal

Johnstone G. Patrick • The Arterial Word

William E. Albright, Jr. • Theology of Laughter

JOHN H. MARKS • THE WATERS OF BABYLON

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CONTENTS: AUGUST 1959

SERMONS

Moments of Truth ..... *Hampton Adams*
At Life's Lifting Places ..... *Robert E. Luccock*
The Background of Eternity ..... *W. Norman Pittenger* 1
What Can You Do When You Can't Do Anything? ..... *George C. Stuart* 1
The Protestant Prodigal ..... *Anderson D. Clark* 1
The Arterial Word ..... *Johnstone G. Patrick* 1
The Theology of Laughter ..... *William E. Albright, Jr.* 2

ARTICLES

The Waters of Babylon ..... *John H. Marks*
Let's Run the Church Like a Business — On Faith! ..... *Robert E. Peterson* 2

FEATURES

Book Reviews 28
Memo 3
Prayers 11, 13, 1
Pulpit Calendar 2
Pulpit Post 2

PULPIT POST

That Concluding Question!

SIR: I am moved to protest so many sermons by men separated from the parish and preaching ministry. Why is this? Is it because you receive so few sermons from men in the field?

Moreover, I wonder if you really realize how academic are the sermons you publish for the most part. Apparently your staff feels that the best sermons are from men who are professors, deans of schools, men who have published books, etc. I remind you that the title of your publication is The Pulpit, not The Classroom. And I, for one, would appreciate the great bulk of sermons coming from men in the pulpit, not in the classroom. Incidentally, I can understand, after reading your material for years, how much is of value to theologians. But as far as help for preaching goes, who preaches to theologians?

DALE R. KLINE
Shoregate Methodist Church
Willowick, Ohio

Fan Club Still Active

SIR: Congratulations on the continuing inclusion of discriminating sermons which keeps The Pulpit un paralleled among journals of con temporary preaching. The Pulpit ha been better than ever.

K. MORGAN EDWARDS
First Methodist Church
Pasadena, California

SIR: The editorial [on "warm churches] in the May issue of Th Pulpit has said so forcefully what have felt for so long, I am eager t emphasize my deep gratitude for i This kind of writing is desperatel needed.

G. RAY JORDAN
Candler School of Theology
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

SIR: Your comments on the "warm church (June Memo) were well pu The present revival in religion on th literal level needs to be branded fo what it really is. The so-called "warn or spiritual church" is completely un related to the problems of men an society. Religion still needs conten

WILLIAM A. JACOBS
Congregational Church
Aurora, Illinois

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXX AUGUST 1959 No. 8

Memo:

HER MAJESTY, Queen Elizabeth II, was in town during the week of this issue's preparation. Now that the fair-gendered personnel has returned to earth after the vision of Prince Philip, we can return to the business of putting out The Pulpit. Having enjoyed the Queen's tour from the safe distance of a television set, I have no souvenirs except her three speeches, faithfully reproduced in the morning's papers. Carefully prepared, no doubt, before her arrival in Chicago, they express in tried and tired phrases her reactions to her day. Recalling the televised vision of her reading them and comparing the printed versions, gives pause for the observation that they were the kind of speeches which one sits still for. They lacked substance and originality and no one cared, because none of us had looked for anything except the obvious. Our only hope was that they would be brief.

Why did Chicago listen, spellbound? Not, of course, because of what was said but because of the speaker. We expected no surprises in the matter of foreign policy declarations or sparkling illustrations. Banquet guests would have swilled soup all over their rented tuxedos had anything fresh appeared. Still, we listened. We listened the way we listen to denominational presidents as they rehearse the comfortabilities of another year's progress at annual convention. We listened as we feel we are expected to when the police officer addresses us: "Didn't you see the sign? Can't you read?" Of course we can read — this is merely the obvious rhetoric leading up to the writing or nonwriting of a ticket. We listened as most people listen to sermons: expecting the obvious.

Pray God they will receive the obvious; but let us hope that it comes through with substance to the declarations and sparkle to the illustrations. It is unfair to a Christian congregation on Christmas or Easter to scour the bypaths of the faith in order to avoid the resounding verities of Incarnation or Resurrection — merely to divert. It seems unfair to detract from the Eucharistic spirit of a Sunday morning's gathering by an esoteric venture into the regions of higher morality and broader syncretism. We are stuck with the obvious. Yet we cannot, as did the Queen, the denominational president or the police officer, rely on the situation or the role-playing of the speaker. We cannot, that is, if we want a message to come through. We may reach our coteries, or the gathered faithful who respond in spite of the blandness of our sermons because of a warm relationship built up elsewhere, as in a bedside ministry. We may reach "religious" people who want to be lulled and soothed by a sermon which does not attempt to get through. But we cannot reach the mature person of a world that knows how to tune us out, that knows it need not hold still for our speeches.

Who shall deliver us from this dilemma? The Good News strikes us as obvious, and people sit still for the obvious only in rare constellations and in the presence of rare persons. What can happen? Whether I read sermons or hear them, my own experience would suggest that in the most attractive the old and the obvious does break through in the new and the startling. This happens, as Phillips Brooks said (the quotation is overused, and *obvious*): when preaching is seen as truth breaking through the personality. We have to see that the words spoken represent pondering, sorting and straining, fusing and refining, an original grasp by people who wish to take a dare. Words must come from people who have a sense for the new and the fresh breaking through in a new creation. We can never live up to the model, but we have a model in our Lord. He could talk about the obvious — good and bad, light and dark, sowers and reapers, foxes and birds — and the compelling urgency of its setting and the venture of a real person make each hearing new. As if we had never heard it before. We hadn't: the change it worked in us on last hearing made us new men for this round. The people to whom he spoke were like the people to whom we speak. He was not a special speaker to special people in special settings. He needed no cosmic billboards, no subtle lighting effects; only the proclamation that the kingdom of God was breaking as something new in the village life of routine people in a routine time. They were shopkeepers and housewives with other things to do; but we cannot picture them swinging their crossed legs idly while he spoke. His message was his gift to the church. Can its preaching still awaken? Or must it be sat still for?

M.E.M.

Truth in the Inner Being
Shatters Outward Defenses

Moments of Truth

By Hampton Adams

Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being.
Psalm 51:6.

TWO WELL-KNOWN people who are skilled in self-expression recently made use only hours apart of the phrase "moment of truth." Dorothy Kilgallen was reporting her first ride in a jet plane. "The moment of truth came," she wrote, "a few minutes after take-off . . . when as I unfastened my seat belt I noticed a number of people standing in the aisle peering out of the windows on the port side of the plane. 'What are they looking at?' I asked my husband. He got up. 'Manhattan Island,' he reported. 'Marvelous view of it.' I catapulted out of my seat and joined him in the aisle. 'Where?' I asked. 'Too late,' he said. 'We're over Morristown, New Jersey, now.' "

Arthur Godfrey, about to enter the hospital for a lung operation, said to reporters, "I'd hate to be left an invalid after this operation. I guess you could say I'm facing just one more moment of truth." He was referring to other operations and to an accident that almost took his life.

It is apparent that for Godfrey the phrase "moment of truth" had a more portentious meaning than for Miss Kilgallen. For her, the moment flashed the truth of the speed of the jet, 550 miles per hour, cities running together and overlapping. I was reminded of what an old man said to me when I was a boy about a speed boat on the Ohio River. "It takes two people to see it," he said. "One says, 'Here it comes' and the other says, 'There it goes.' "

What flashed into the mind of Godfrey in his hour of truth we can only surmise. He did let it be known that the possibility of invalidism, a thought we all try to suppress, was lifted up into consciousness. We would like to know if, in his moment of truth, he considered how he woul accept and adjust himself to invalidism if it we to come. Happily it appears that he will again b able to live an active life. But rather than gue what thoughts flooded his mind in his particul moment of truth, when at the age of fifty-five h faced not only the possibility of invalidism but death, let us prove the phenomenon that is r ferred to as the "moment of truth."

I have tried to trace the origin of the phras A professional librarian to whom I referred th question became interested and we discovered th it was being used as far back as the last decade the 17th century when John Norris, an Englis philosopher and divine, wrote of "moments truth" in his *Practical Discourses.* Now, I a afraid its common use will make it a cliché. was hardly more than that in the context in whic Miss Kilgallen used it. This is too bad becaus the present growing understanding of the subco scious mind makes the moments of truth mo understandable and more significant than eve before.

Pretensions

Moments of truth are times when the hidde and suppressed thoughts and influences in the sub conscious mind break through to the surface. Th happens when the situation weakens or destro our conscious pretensions. Suppose, for instanc that Mr. Godfrey, with some reason, because the handicaps he has overcome in the past, ha been saying to himself, "Nothing can ever get m down; I have the will to overcome any disease injury." The doctor's report that he would hav to undergo chest surgery weakened that confidenc if he had it, and therefore the possibility that h has always known in the depth of his being thru itself up into his conscious mind, and he talke about the chance of invalidism.

A moment of truth is when our defenses a down, when there is no escape from the surgeon scalpel, when the law of sowing and reaping bringing its harvest. A moment of truth is whe one recognizes that things will not change; tha

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HAMPTON ADAMS, *minister of Park Avenue Christian Church, served pastorates in Stanford and Frankfort, Kentucky, and St. Louis, Missouri, before coming to New York in 1954. A graduate of Transylvania College, The College of the Bible, and Yale University, he is the author of several books in the religious field. In 1947 Dr. Adams served as president of the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ.*

herefore, if there is to be a change it will have o take place in him. This is the moment when ld things pass away and all things become new. upremely, this is God's moment because the per- on recognizes that he is only the creature and God is the Creator.

The moment of truth is also the moment of reedom; freedom follows in the wake of acknowl- dged truth. Harry Golden, author of the best- elling *Only in America*,[1] had such a moment of ruth and consequent freedom when the secret he ad kept since moving from New York to a distant tate many years ago was publicized. He served a erm in the penitentiary, and when he was released e sought a new life far from home. Since then he as led a wholesome and exemplary life; but al- vays he kept the lid on his secret, or so he thought. When the news broke that Harry Golden had a rison record one of his editor friends wrote him o this effect: "The only difference now, Harry, s that you know that we know your story; and we hall keep on loving you." I have no way of know- ng how Harry Golden feels about the release of he news that he had tried so hard to suppress, but am sure that this moment of truth has set his oul free.

Remembered Steadfastness

We can see the full dimensions of the moment f truth in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. His noment of truth came on the Damascus Road when e was on his way to exterminate more Christians fter consenting to the death of Stephen and breath- ng threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord. We can be sure Saul's conversion was not s sudden as it appeared. Back of it was the mem- ry of Stephen, his words of defense and that vonderful light on his face even as he was being toned to death. Saul remembered, too, the stead- astness of other disciples of Christ. It would be trange if what Gamaliel said about these disciples n one occasion had not come to Saul's ears: "Men f Israel, take care what you do with these men . . . Keep away from these men and let them alone; or if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it vill fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able o overthrow them. You might be found opposing God!"

Paul wanted to live a righteous life. As he re- ealed later in the seventh chapter of Romans, he gonized because he was unable to find power to ve up to the demands of the laws of Judaism. His fanaticism in fighting Christ can be accounted or by the secret doubts he suppressed in his heart bout his inherited religion.

The man who was about to enter Damascus to unt and destroy Christians was at war with him- elf. Outwardly he was the enemy of Christ. The ruth in his inward being told him that Christ was Lord and Savior. The blindness that struck Saul, we can be very sure, was due to the conflict be- tween the outward and the inward man. C. G. Jung has said: "Psychogenetic blindness is accord- ing to my experience always due to an unwilling- ness to see, that is, to understand and to realize something that is incompatible with the conscious attitude. Paul's unwillingness to see corresponds with his fanatical resistance to Christianity."[2]

God in the Fight

The moment of truth for Saul came after he had allowed the fight between his outward preten- sion and his real inner self to lay him low. God was in this fight. We may explain it psychological- ly, but it was God's doing. It is God's way of humbling a man.

In this moment of truth Saul recognized that Christ was calling him. He began to pray as he had never prayed before. And when Ananias came later as the messenger of Christ he was will- ing to listen. Then his sight was restored and he was filled with the Holy Spirit. The moment of truth lighted all the rest of his life. He was never disobedient to the heavenly vision.

When we see how the inner life of Saul forced the conflict that resulted in his conversion, his moment of truth, these words of the Psalmist take on a more profound meaning: "Behold, thou de- sirest truth in the inward being." Perhaps many of us have interpreted this statement merely as a warning against hypocrisy, requiring that a person live up to his pretension of righteousness. This is turning the truth upside down, especially in this day when there are few social pressures to make men appear better than they are. The hope of salvation is never in the possibility of pulling out- ward good down into the inner being, but in allow- ing the truth in the inner being to shatter the outward defenses.

Before this can be done there must be truth in the inward being. This is the reason that the conscious and subconscious impressions that par- ents make on their children are so important. This is why Christian education is a primary function of the church. This is the imperative of Christian evangelism: that the light of the glory of God on the face of Jesus Christ penetrate to the inward life of every person. In these ways truth had sunk into the inward being of Saul of Tarsus.

The moment of truth for Saul was violent be- cause he resisted so long the truth in his inward being. The moment of truth need not be delayed, nor need it be so tempestuous. Every moment of real prayer is a moment of truth because prayer that is offered in spirit and in truth breaks through our pretenses.

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[1] Harry Golden, *Only in America* (Cleveland: World Publishing ., 1958).

[2] C. G. Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, translated by H. G. and C. F. Baynes (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1945). Copyright by Bollingen Foundation. Used by permission.

The Crisis of Faith
Reveals the Presence of God

THE WATERS

THE MYSTERY of life is sometimes overpowering. What does one say to stunned parents when their child is suddenly disabled or killed? What can a nation think when its independence is threatened or lost by causes beyond its control? What does one do when every reason for living seems to vanish? Where does one turn for answers? What help is religion?

This was Judah's predicament by the rivers of Babylon. How reconcile the victories of Moses and David, the Covenant and Promised Land with defeat and exile? Was God God or not? Judah had known many crises, but none so terrible, final and inexplicable as the captivity. She had watched the Assyrians enslave one people after another, even Israel, turning the world upside down. But still she had been able to preserve her identity and a semblance of independence. Then Assyria fell, and the glee of Judah knew no bounds. The arch enemy had been defeated, God had caused justice to triumph and had redeemed his chosen people. But within a generation Judah too was in exile, Jerusalem sacked, the temple destroyed by the Babylonians. Life had "tumbled in." One could only weep by the waters of Babylon.

Unexpected Ruin

The destruction was completely unexpected. It did not make sense in Judah's history. God had brought the people out of Egypt, given them the land, promised to defend them; and now this seemed to contradict everything. It seemed death to all their hopes and struggles, the ultimate riddle of their national history. For death is the enormous riddle of life, the fate of all striving and pain and preparation. Hardly the reward one expects fo long and faithful service! Judah had expecte something much better. We do too.

But not only was Judah's destruction unex pected, it seemed useless. What possible en could be served by the leveling of Jerusalem Could God have any purpose in the extinction o his people, in the annihilation of the temple h had ordained? If Judah's faith were being teste why so severely? Why such a final and complet destruction? Any crisis is alarming; it snatches th rug of normalcy from under our feet. It calls int question our ordinary patterns of thought and ou accepted ways of doing things. This is the drea of death; it calls everything into question an makes us wonder what in life is worthwhile. Th Jews were weeping over the death of their natio because it seemed to belie their interpretation o their history. Had everything been in vain? Wa God with them or not?

These crises in life are crises in faith, becaus they demand a fresh look at life. When one i forced to revalue one's life in the face of cata trophe, what possible explanations are there? Wha answers could the Jews in exile give?

For one thing they could say that their inte pretation of their history had been wrong, tha their ideas of God were subjective and irrelevan that the catastrophe of their nation was adequat proof they had been deluding themselves abou God long enough. This is always a tempting an swer. Job could have said that his wife was righ that his deprivation was proof that his notion o God and life was wrong, that he was in fac "pawning the life of his children for God's re spectability."

"If God is good he is not God; if God is Go he is not good." The disciples could have given similar answer to the death of Jesus. They coul have said the crucifixion was conclusive proof tha all their ideas about Jesus were wrong, that h lived and died like any other man, that his deat was supremely tragic. There is something to b said for this view of life. Surely the facts do no appear to permit another interpretation. Th

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By John H. Marks

OF BABYLON

emple is gone and with it the religion; Job is lestitute and forsaken; Jesus is dead and with him ll ideas of a Messiah. A catastrophe has occurred nd this is proof that God if he does exist is not ove. One can make a strong case for it. But the ews did not reason this way, Job did not take is wife's advice, and the disciples did not argue hat Jesus lived in vain, for even in seeming defeat hey could not honestly admit that their past exerience of God had been simply a delusion. Their atastrophe could not outweigh their history. They lid not have to choose one or the other, but somehow God's purpose must include this crisis too.

Inferior God?

Another possible interpretation for the Jews vas that their God was inferior to the gods of the Assyrians and Babylonians, that he was in fact not God at all. They could have said that the Lord vas mighty in Palestine but impotent against Assur and Marduk, that they had pinned their iopes to a lesser star. The disciples could have aid something similar, that Jesus was powerful, wonder worker, but not strong enough. They ould have said their hopes in him were hopes in he wrong man, that there was no use bucking he force of popular opinion, that a general was eeded and not a teacher. We can argue similarly hat belief in God is all right so long as we suspend ur reason; but once we begin to reason about life, ur God is vanquished. For religion is the opiate f weak minds, and faith simply cannot stand up gainst the superior power of reason. If we are onest at all such arguments must occur to us. But ie Jews did not reason this way, and the disciples id not draw these conclusions, for they could not onestly say that their past experience had been nly ephemeral, unreal, and that beyond it was omething bigger, before which their view of life ust pale as moon before sun. In catastrophe we o not simply throw faith away, unless in the ast it has meant nothing. If faith can be destroyed crisis it was scarcely worth having to begin with.

How then does faith meet its crisis? The story the fall of Jerusalem is instructive. First of all the Jews were honest about their sorrow, honest about their resentment and hate. They did not attempt to gloss it over at all. "By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered Jerusalem." They were not dismissing the destroyed city as a quirk of history or as a benevolent fate, but the exile was desperately awful. Everything worthwhile in their life seemed to have gone. All their strivings had been in vain, all their hopes dashed. There seemed no purpose in living, no reasonableness in struggle, nothing but despair. What had happened was central to their life, not peripheral. It cut to the quick of their religious experience and drained their moral energy to the dregs. "How can we sing the songs of Zion in a strange land?" they cried. "Happy is he who dashes your little ones against the stones."

No Escape

Faith is above all honest. It does not shield itself from the awful circumstances of life with a rose-colored glass. So much that passes for Christian faith is really dishonest, sentimental nonsense, even cruelty. What kind of faith is it that tithes scrupulously but refuses to sanction wages commensurate with the work involved? What kind of Christian respectability can compensate for a refusal to recognize our own countrymen as human beings, sons of God as much as we? What kind of faith is worth anything unless it faces squarely and honestly the problems of life? Christianity is not an escape from reality and Christians are not exempt from trouble or perplexity. They too have short tempers and bad dispositions, and it does no good to put a good face on a rotten situation. They too have intellectual and emotional problems, they too must confront the shattering experience of death, and it does no good to close one's eyes to that. Belief in God is not a panacea for the evils of life. It is too easy to make God in our own image. "The good" is not necessarily on God's side, and it must often seem that the "good God" is not on man's side either. There is no point in dodging the problem. Unbelief tries to put a good face on everything, but faith enables one to cry out

in honest fear, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

This honesty on the part of the Jews led them to revise and enlarge their notion of God. Their god had been too small. He had been their god only and not the god of the world. But when Assyria threatened their national existence, led captive their brothers, the Israelites, then they realized that God was either nothing or he was everything. And they learned to confess that he was working out his will not only in Jerusalem, but in the farthest corners of the earth as well. He was not only God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but God also of Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. His will was inscrutable but sure. Otherwise nothing would make sense. The miracle of their redemption from Egypt would be only a freak of history, and they were convinced that history had no freak events. Either their God was impotent, unequal to the gods of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and all their past history was meaningless, or else he was working out his will by means of the Mesopotamians too and was therefore God of the world. From this catastrophe was born the great idea of monotheism. That is what faith could make of disaster. Catastrophe, crisis had challenged the accepted pattern of thought and God had revealed himself greater than they dreamed.

We usually limit God. We limit his concern to our pet theories; we limit his mercy by denying forgiveness; we limit his sovereignty by describing him in detail. We think we somehow can affect God's purpose, place him unequivocally on our side. But the witness of the Bible is that God's purpose is unchanging and sure, that also in the midst of our deepest heartache he is working out his will for us. "The sting of death is sin" said Paul, the dread that God's purpose is not after all certain. "But thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ." God's purpose is sure; this victory of faith rests on Jesus the Christ. Who can tell what revelation God will give of himself in crisis, if we will only hear and see and understand? The hour of catastrophe can be not an hour of fate but an hour of triumph when we learn that in and through and by our troubles God accepts us as sons and works out his sovereign will.

New Knowledge

But the crisis of faith also brings a new knowledge of oneself. One learns the awful truth of failure and despair and the redeeming truth of human dignity and God's freedom. Judah not only revised her notion of God, she also revised her estimate of herself. Up until the exile the Jews had thought of themselves as the privileged few of God, enjoying a special exemption from destruction. They were the elect and nothing could harm them. But now they discovered that God had chosen them not for special exemption from life's problems, but for special opportunity to serve and be served by their neighbors, to proclaim meaning in an apparently meaningless world. And to this opportunity they had been remiss. They had not been lights in the world but they had enjoyed their heritage as a matter of course. Thus in catastrophe they discovered the world, and this discovery brought them face to face again with their God-given opportunity and God's judgment on them for their lack of faith and hardness of heart. This new perception was coupled with their new awareness of God. If God were the God of the world, then the captivity must be part of his will, his judgment on Israel and Judah and his continued granting of their opportunity to be lights in the world. This awareness made them humble. It did not answer all their questions, but it saved them from despair because it revealed both their failure and their hope, both God's mercy in the past and his judgment which still allowed them hope for the future.

Summons to Honesty

Judgment is not easy to bear. We try to justify ourselves and excuse ourselves and escape our condemnation. We do not really want to be forgiven so we try to make forgiveness an escape from judgment. But God's forgiveness is not a means of escape. Rather it is his gift of freedom for our responsible shouldering of judgment in the light both of God's wrath and mercy. We are judged and in our judgment we know what we are and that God is for us. Judah finally had to go to Babylon, but in Babylon she learned God's mercy anew, and even the exile became part of God's purpose.

The waters of Babylon, foreign to our favorite ways of living, are a summons to honesty and repentance. But they are also a summons to hope that we may learn both what God is and what we are and so be grateful for our lives. This is not an easy optimism, but humble perseverance in trust and obedience. It is seeing evil and believing God, acknowledging the mystery of suffering with the hope of redemption, pursuing the death of error with the love of Truth. The crisis of faith reveals radically the presence of God. By it we may learn that God the Judge is also God the Redeemer, and in this profound mystery find release and calm.

> Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.
>
> When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.
>
> For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.

An Unintentionally Well-Phrased Question –
"What on Earth Is the Holy Spirit?"

At Life's Lifting Places

By Robert E. Luccock

IT IS reported in the Book of Acts that when Paul came to Ephesus he found some disciples here and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" The disciples answered, "No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." Most of us are not in the same boat with the disciples. We have heard that there is a Holy Spirit. Great numbers of people today are genuinely confused by the idea of a Holy Spirit. "What is it?" they ask. God, we know, and Christ, we know, but who or what on earth is the Holy Spirit? Is it just a theological puzzle? Does it have any relevance to the common problems and universal needs of men? Yet, puzzling as it is, the idea of the Holy Spirit is so central in Christian thought that one cannot readily detour around it or dismiss it with a shrug. We had better wrestle with it until we get an answer.

The idea of the Holy Spirit came not out of the abstractions of some theologian's thinking, but out of the experience of ordinary men. Ernest F. Scott has reminded us, "The early Christians did not invent the Holy Spirit. They knew they had received new energies, which must have come to them from above . . . . When they framed their belief in the Spirit, they were not just putting into words some abstract thinking, they were trying to explain visible facts which they could not account for in any other way."[1] The Holy Spirit was important to the early Christians because it accounted for the most important events and experiences in their lives. The experience of the Holy Spirit is no less important to us today. What we call it makes little difference as long as we don't miss it.

It may be easy to understand the Holy Spirit if we can picture him through analogy. The St. Lawrence Seaway is a system of navigation by which ships sail inland from the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Superior, rising over six hundred feet in the course of their voyage. The elevation is accomplished by a series of locks or lifting places where vessels are raised from lower to higher levels. At these lifting places where the rapids and waterfalls make river navigation impossible, the ships are lifted through canals of deep water. The ship enters a lock; while it is then flooded with water the boat rises to the level of the canal beyond the lock and can sail on at the higher altitude toward the destination far inland. Likewise, the Holy Spirit is God coming to our needs at the lifting places along the way of life's voyage, raising us from one level to another beyond rapids or breaking points where the journey would otherwise end.

In the Church

We think most commonly of the Holy Spirit as he comes with power and moving effect upon the church. At how many lifting places has the Holy Spirit come to raise the church up to where she could take new passages on her voyage? God came at Pentecost when the whole enterprise of his love and his will needed a forward move, a lifting up to new journeys. What would happen to the life, death and resurrection of Christ now? Would this be just the death of one more prophet in Jerusalem, or would God use these events to gain new leverage upon men in the agelong struggle of love against hate, of good against evil, of light against the dark? In the outpouring of the Divine Spirit at Pentecost God came with power to lift the community of the covenant to new understandings and new enterprise. We can hardly tell at this distance what actually happened on that day, how many of the manifestations described in the Book of Acts appeared visibly and audibly, but that God lifted the whole undertaking of his will to new purposes and new dimensions no one can doubt.

The Holy Spirit comes sometimes in a remarkable way to one particular congregation of

[1] Ernest F. Scott, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958). Used by permission.

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Christians. Bryan Green tells of an industrial parish in England where the church had been lifeless and irrelevant to the necessities and concerns of her people. Then the Spirit of God began to possess that parish, lifting up first a few, then more and more men to witness for their faith. Green describes what happened in these words:

> Each morning at six-thirty I met for three-quarters of an hour, some sixty or seventy men and women of varying ages. Briefly I told them the main points of my sermon for that evening. For the next twenty minutes they put down in their notebooks, in their own words quite simply, any ideas they had about the subject about which I was going to preach. . . . Then we went round in turn reading what we had written down. . . . Out of the twenty or so contributions which we heard, six or seven would clearly fit in with the sermon. That evening before the service I met those particular contributors for half an hour of prayer and discussion. . . . After the worship in the service I preached the sermon. As soon as I had finished, I stayed in the pulpit while one after the other came up by me and had his say. . . . The fact [is] that this cooperation was immensely powerful, and very many who would have been untouched by a sermon delivered by a clergyman were moved deeply by the preaching of the Word which came from the worshiping community. As one fine young worker put it when he told me that he had accepted Christ as his Saviour and King: "You see, Sir, it wasn't your sermon, it was what so-and-so said. He was one of us."[2]

Green reports what the vicar of that parish told him fifteen years later: "The Spirit of God had begun in the lives of men and women transformations which were still being completed within the life and membership of the church."

More than one congregation has been awakened to new life and new purpose by the Holy Spirit kindling upon them, arousing people out of moral lethargy to a dedication they had not known, or out of spiritual apathy to a discipline they had not accepted. It may not always happen as it happened in Green's industrial parish, but somewhere a congregation will discover a dedication or respond to a necessity and find both a rapture and a power which they had not known. God, by the sending forth of his own Spirit, seeks constantly to lift the church to higher life. We believe he uses all kinds of people, unimaginable situations, sometimes the queerest accidents of history, to reveal himself and manifest his presence and power. Henry P. Van Dusen has expressed it this way:

> The Holy Spirit testifies to the immediately present activity of the Divine — God-near and God-mighty. The "Spirit of God" or "Holy Spirit" is always God-at-hand, and the "Spirit of God" or "Holy Spirit" is always God-at-work.[3]

One assumes the right posture in thinking of God as the Supreme Being, majestic, omnipotent. The prophet Isaiah described him as "The High and Holy One who inhabits eternity." But we must not forget the rest of what the prophet said: "Yet he makes his dwelling with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit." Just as Christ was the visible demonstration of the heart, mind and will of God for all the world to see, so the Holy Spirit is the manifestation by which we are reminded that God is present, that he is concerned, and that he is able for our immediate needs. To speak in some orthodox terminology is not important. What is of life and death consequence is that we do not lose the experience of the Holy Spirit, that we do not unconsciously fall into ways of thinking which put God far off and long ago, forgetting that he is intimately present to his church and to his people.

It is no less true that the Holy Spirit comes to individuals at the decisive lifting places of life and bears them upward beyond breaking points in such a way that they do not founder. Sometimes the Holy Spirit appears when least expected. Sometimes life is lifted when we think it least likely we can avoid shipwreck. The Holy Spirit came to one man in a pigpen once, a man who had certainly made moral shipwreck of his life. But God lifted the prodigal sinner up to the dignity of a forgiven son and he was a new man. God stands close by to all our moral defeats and failures so that if we "come to ourselves" and ask his forgiveness, we can stand up cleansed from all unrighteousness.

Redemption Not Easy

"But what price redemption?" some would protest! Before anyone chatters flippantly about the Holy Spirit overcoming evil with good he ought to walk through the blighted slums of a great city and see the filth, the disease, the moral degradation which the Holy Spirit must overcome. Such redemption is not easily done, and it becomes us not to minimize the price to be paid. Yet beyond any question, the Holy Spirit can and does transform evil into love.

But if he can, why does it not always happen? One thinks of those words from Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset* where one embittered character says, "You talk of Jesus saving his lambs, I'll show you some lambs that Jesus forgot." Who can account for the forgotten "lambs"? It happens that life is not always put into the locks where God can lift it. Sometimes through our own tragic failure, sometimes through the evil and neglect of others, a life is so blighted, so denied, that it cannot receive God's lifting power. To know or to see such human derelicts ought to prompt the Christian to say of anyone who so deprived another life of its chance to be elevated above the breaking points, what Jesus once said, "It were better for that man if he had a millstone hanged about his neck and were drowned in the midst of the sea."

Perhaps the most decisive lifting place at which

[2] Bryan Green, *The Practice of Evangelism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951; London: Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.). Used by permission.

[3] Henry P. Van Dusen, *Spirit, Son and Father* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). Used by permission.

e Holy Spirit ever meets a man is when he re-
ews a dedication to some high and holy purpose.
Vhen a man comes to some breaking point, unable
summon either strength or will to go on, then
have his devotion restored, is to discover a power
at means the difference between death and life.
Ve all come to such places of personal exhaustion,
the ship going up the St. Lawrence must come
the Lachine rapids. Unless there be a canal
ith lifting locks to elevate that ship, she has
ached her journey's end one thousand miles
ort of her destination. In the life of the soul,
nless there be some lifting power where our own
nsecration runs out, we cannot reach beyond the
pids. But here the Holy Spirit does meet us to
ft us if we will let him.

Outpulling the Drag

God does work through beauty to refresh tired
irits, but where the Holy Spirit's lifting is of
en greater consequence is not in the presence
nd effect of things naturally and inherently beau-
ful, but in the presence of things naturally ugly
nd inherently evil. Here is where a man needs
mighty lift if he is to go on, when all the cir-
mstances are set to pull him under and destroy
im. It is at this point that God draws a man up
the inspiration of great dedication, when the
ing toward which life is set outpulls the drag
nd drowning effect of disappointment and frustra-
on. This is God working through the circum-
ances of life and the emotions of human feeling.

Robert Louis Stevenson's life brought him
out as much misery as ten men are usually
quired to suffer in a lifetime: illness, pain,
isunderstanding. Again and again he was down
the depths of misery and almost a hopeless
rospect, yet always he could say, "There is some-
ing in me worth saving." It was the worth of
hat could be done that saved him. Compounded
ough his devotion surely was with personal am-
tion, having little that one could identify as
ligious consecration, nevertheless, this dedication
moral goodness and to human blessedness was
power that sustained and elevated Stevenson at
long succession of lifting places. In the face of
ery kind of affliction he had, according to one
iographer, a "courage that did not even bother
be grim." As Stevenson once wrote to Meredith:

> For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness . . . I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on — ill or well, is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle . . . I would have preferred a place of trumpetings and the open air over my head.

The great author of *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island* perhaps would not have called it God's Spirit. The eyes of faith, however, may recognize God at Stevenson's lifting places, and may recognize God where countless others have been lifted up in dedication to making the world a more blessed place in which to dwell.

The eyes of faith will recognize God at their own personal lifting places when the going is impossible under their own power. God meets the church when she is bound and cannot move. God waits where his holy purposes need the divine lift. God waits where each of us needs him most. Isaiah gives us this promise from God, "Even to your old age I am He, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." This is a text to give faith comfort when the going is steep, to set alongside those words from the New Testament, "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things." In all our needs God waits for us with a steadying arm for our weakness, with restraining force for our temptations, with the spirit of truth for our perplexities, with forgiveness for our sins. May it be that God's Holy Spirit will meet each one of us in his own frightful needs with his resources to confirm and claim us for himself, that we may be borne ahead toward our high calling in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

OUR Father God, may it be true that thou dost forgive, that thou dost hear confession of sin, and that thou dost make a difference in men's lives. If thou dost not hear, then to whom can we speak?

We confess that we have done those things which we never should have done and cannot understand now why we did and why we do. Why do we dirty love with calculation, powder and pamper our pride with pouts, fear to allow friendship to be more than cosmetic smiles; why do we wear life and never live it? Why, O Father God? And, of course, there are so many things we should have done and did not do and do not do — words of appreciation that were not said, words of encouragement that were forgotten, acts of simple kindness that occurred to us but never occupied us, words and deeds stillborn in our mind. Why?

Forgive us; it is not that we hate, O Lord, it is just that we do not love. Dost thou understand us, Lord? For we do not understand ourselves. And thus we pray to be forgiven — for that which we have done and did not do. Make us, O Lord, healthy and new. In the name of the Christ, Amen. — *Anderson D. Clark, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Madison, Wisconsin.*

The Background of Eternity

By W. Norman Pittenger

THE THOUGHT of ultimate destiny has dropped out of the consciousness of vast numbers of people in our own day. One of the reasons for the triviality and superficiality that so many say they find in life is simply that they have no cosmic background for the little concerns of their day-by-day existence. If one does not believe in heaven and hell, it might be said, one does not believe that human life is much worth bothering about.

It is of course true that many of the older symbolic pictures of heaven and hell, not to speak of the intermediate state, have been discarded by almost everybody. But as so often happens, when the bath water was thrown out, the baby went with it. It was right that a literal hell-fire, with little devils chasing one around, should have been dismissed; but alienation from God, willfully chosen and everlastingly endured because one did not want to be with the God whom one hated, is too genuine a possibility ever to slip out of our consciousness. Because we have seen that heaven is not paved with gold, or built up on clouds, or entirely devoted to the playing of hymns on harps, it does not follow that the reality which these intimated has no existence. Indeed, unless all theistic interpretation of life is in error and the Christian faith itself a dream, there must be that life in God, eternally known and loved, which is what is meant by "heaven," no matter how outlandish some of the pictures of it may be.

Along with this discarding of the thought of an ultimate destiny for man, there has come for many people a loss of the conviction that what they do matters in any ultimate and final sense. Since to all intents and purposes life ends with death, what is done in life has for such people a significance determined solely by its personal and social use-

fulness. That means that its significance is s temporal that it becomes largely a matter o expediency or convenience. Death, too, loses it seriousness. It may be a more dreadful thing fron one point of view, since it marks the end onc and for all of human life. But it is less seriou than the Christian approach would suggest, sinc no longer does it mean a change to a new an different state of being, in which one's past action determine one's new *status,* and in which one i approaching either very much closer to the de terminer of all destiny, or being irretrievabl shut off from the possibility ever of approachin him.

Contemporary Art

It has long seemed to me that the best illustra tion of the modern frame of mind and attitud towards life is found in much contemporary ar Here you have excellent characterization or repro duction or impression of the scene or the perso portrayed. But you have very little of the "dimen sion of depth" by virtue of which there comes i the greatest art the suggestion and intimation o a "more" which never gets on the canvas but i there only by hint and adumbration. There i some modern art which does give this. In th work of Georges Rouault, for example, one feel that cosmic meaning is spoken. There is the sam sort of limitation in much modern music. If on may venture in a field where one has no exper knowledge, one might suggest that while Shostakovich composes with superb technical ski and impressive orchestration, he lacks the feelin of splendor that one finds in a Sibelius. It is no entirely fanciful to say that the latter has dept not only because he speaks from the dark norther forests of Finland, but also because he speaks fro a sense of ultimates which is lacking in the brillian Russian.

I feel the same thing in writers like Thoma Hardy as compared with the more brittle moder nontheists. Hardy was aware of cosmic thing even if he discarded the Christian ideas abou them. Many of the moderns have not even bee

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vare of the fact that man has ultimates which ust be faced and with which an accounting must e made. With the return of our fiction writers religion, there may be a new sense of depth in eir books. Already one has seen this in some ntemporary literature, not least notably in the ndertones of Hemingway's later novels.

In our own experience the sense of a cosmic ackground, with the possibility of eternal aliena-on from all goodness and loveliness on the one nd or the possibility of eternal participation in at goodness and loveliness on the other, makes genuine difference in the *attitude* taken towards l that we do or that is done to us. For one thing - and this is not an unimportant point — the an who has this background for his life is much ore readily able to face the tragedy of life — "to ke it," as the phrase has it — than the man who arries all his eggs in one basket."

Constant Undercurrent

I think often of Friedrich von Hügel's story of e young medical man who came to see James artineau, the religious philosopher who was mself a Unitarian, although of a rather orthodox st of mind. The youth asked Martineau how he ight come to see the importance and perhaps en the truth of the religious outlook. He was ld to go to Germany to live for some time in erlin with the students at the university and to serve their beliefs and the way in which they et the vicissitudes of life. After that, he was ld to go to south Germany, where Catholicism ourishes so charmingly, so simply and so bravely, nd there live with the peasants in a little village, udying once more beliefs about and attitudes wards life. The young man followed Martineau's ggestions. He returned with the report that hile in many ways he had felt more at home with e sophisticated agnostic or atheistic students in erlin, he had found that their ability to meet fe was sadly deficient; whereas the country easants, with all the "superstitions" that he felt arked their Catholicism, could and did meet life ith a courage and confidence that was remark-le and to him convincing. I am sure that it precisely the constant Catholic *feel* for the super-atural, coupled with the constant undercurrent eternal and ultimate destiny at stake in one's ery moment of life, that gives to the simple easant a serenity and security which are lacking the person (highly educated or otherwise) who s no such belief.

Something from the theater may be suggestive re. I have observed that in recent years, as a action from the old backdrops which hinted at rdens, mountains, ocean or other "depth-views," e designers of stage scenery have taken to con-ning their sets to interiors or to very immediate d easily controllable scenes. It is a patent fact that the old sets were often extremely artificial and overdone, both in detail and in blatancy of portrayal. But now and again a designer has had the courage to restore "depth-view." He has not been Victorian in blatantly bringing depth right onto the stage; but he has somehow managed, by dint of light and shadow, proportion and perspective, sometimes by a glimpse through a window or an open door, to hint at a depth beyond the forestage and the immediate scene.

Life, we have been told over and over again, is like a drama. If it is, then we *must* act it out on the forestage, in the immediacy of things. But if it is to be a drama that takes account of what really exists, it must have about it some suggestion of the "depth-view." There must be some windows and open doors through which a glimpse may be had, not just of another room, but of a far vista, stretching off in fact into the eternities. If there is not something like this, the drama which is being played becomes so cheap and so trivial that it seems hardly worth the acting. Then is it any wonder that the actors feel that they are being cheated, while the audience says that it is all "sound and fury, signifying nothing"?

Prayer

O THOU who hast made us for thyself, our hearts are restless until they rest in thee. When we think of thee we forget our limitations and reach beyond ourselves to the realm of thy limitless power. In thy presence we find rest; in thy wisdom we find truth; in thy mercy we find forgiveness; in thy love we find an answer to the evil of the world.

O thou who dwellest in light unapproachable, may the shining of thy love drive the shadows from our lives, making them centers of health, cheerfulness, and courage. Break through the mists of doubt, dispelling the clouds that impede our progress and making clear the way that we should follow. Come nearer to us than we have ever known thee in our happiest moments of vision and teach us more of the wonder of thy laws.

Light the flame of faith upon the altar of our minds. Help us to praise thee with lives of radiant service. Because we have paused these moments and lifted our hearts to thee, may we be able to go forth into the world with love toward all men, with hope to impart to the discouraged, with support to offer to every good cause, and with faith in the ultimate triumph of right. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. *Robert M. Bartlett, First Congregational Church, Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.*

What Can You Do When You Can't Do Anything?

By George C. Stuart

He saved others; he cannot save himself.
Mark 15:31

A GROUP of ministers met to discuss a growing racial tension in their community. Several proposals were offered, but none seemed to find the approval of the entire group. At last, just as the meeting appeared ready to evaporate into thin air, an elderly Negro minister rose and offered a prayer. He said in part, "Lord, forgive us because we have failed Thee; but don't think too badly of us. The real question we face today is, What can you do when you can't do anything?"

The whiplash of that question has found every earnest spirit. We feel its cut when we face the massive social issues of our time. What can we do to stop a war? What can we do to prevent one? We feel helpless and almost hopeless when we measure our strength against that task. What can you do to save the world from a depression? How can we shape the future so that every man, woman and child shall not only have food enough and shelter but also a meaningful and secure place in the world? What can we do when we can't do anything?

Jesus himself faced this very question. The enemies of Jesus nailed him to the cross. "Now," they said, "Jesus can't do anything. We've stopped him." And it seemed that they were right. Jesus' disciples were scattered; his followers had fled. The bright prospects for his ministry were now eclipsed by the dark events of his betrayal, trial and crucifixion. Even the curious bystanders who had paused to hear Jesus teaching had turned into an angry mob, spitting curses and demanding the blood of the teacher. What could Jesus do now?

No one but Jesus was prepared for the cross. James and John thought that he was helpless, and they no longer quarreled over the chief places i the coming kingdom. The kingdom was not com ing now, they thought. Peter went fishing, return ing to the more familiar ways of life after a grea hope and a great disappointment. Judas could no tolerate even the prospect of a failure and sol the mission out before it gave out. What coul Jesus do now?

Surely no one ever bared his flesh to the cuttin edge of our question as did Jesus on the cros What could Jesus do when it seemed that ther was nothing to do but die? Looking at that help less figure on the cross, someone on the edge o the crowd cried out in derision, "He saved others he cannot save himself."

Insult to Wisdom

"He cannot save himself." That was true. "H saved others." That was truer. Strangely, th words which had begun as an insult changed int wisdom. The taunt hung in the air as the rea truth about this Jesus. Suddenly, Jesus did not loo so helpless any more. Some of the crowd bega to remember what had happened that day sinc they started on the road to Golgotha; Jesus' r sponse to their cruelty began to take hold of the hearts.

They remembered that at one point on th road Jesus had turned and comforted the wome who wept for him. "Weep not for me," he sai and then warned them of greater dangers than cross. They remembered how in the midst of h own suffering he had taken time to take care o his own mother. Jesus had said to John, the b loved disciple, "Behold thy mother"; and to h mother Jesus had said, "Behold thy son." Fro that day on Mary lived in John's household.

The bystanders at the cross could not snee now. The memory was still fresh of Jesus' wor to a repentant thief who suffered beside hi "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." helpless Jesus bestowed upon a worthless life a eternal worth and on a lost life an eternal destin The mocking words of the scribes and elders we

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eer truth. When he could not save himself, sus was saving others.

On the cross Jesus forgave his enemies. "Father, rgive them for they know not what they do." sus suffered in such a manner that a hardened oman soldier, who was accustomed to the sight men dying daily on a cross, found a new meaning human life. "Surely, this man was a son of od."

Later, much later, someone remembered some-ing else Jesus did when it seemed that he could nothing. Simon of Cyrene had shared the cross Jesus on the way to the place of the skull. The uch of that cross had changed Simon's life for-er.

These things Jesus did when it seemed he uld do nothing. He could not save himself; at was fact. He gave others hope; that was ier. Thus, as we look at Jesus on the cross, we cognize that there are some things, important ings — perhaps the most important things of our es — that we can do as Christians when it seems at we can do nothing.

Others

At such a time we can determine that others ll be made better, not worse, because we suffer. sus did that. Paul did that too. In prison he ote letters to the churches which remain the best ws from a bad time that we have in the early story of the church. Once Paul reminded the urches in Galatia, "I preached to you because an illness." What a strange excuse for preach-g to anybody, yet Paul found a reason even in s weakness for helping others.

Several years ago a medical missionary in dia became incurably ill with cancer. He was vised to stop all work and live within the limits his remaining strength. Three months later, aring of a new medicine and a new technique eful for some of his patients, he boarded a plane London. On the return trip he became so ill at he died a few hours after reaching Bombay. terally, with dying hands this Christian doctor ld out hope for others. If he could not save nself, he could save others.

Yet not all men are able to communicate life d strength at such a time. A father stricken th a light heart attack called his son and de-anded that he give up an important career in an-ier city in order that the son could be near the ther. The tragedy was that the son, obedient to e father's wishes, resigned his post; and now, ough the father is fully recovered, the son is al-ost a house-servant of the father's whims. Moth-s are not the only parents who tie apron strings out their children.

At times a father will communicate the prob-ns and tensions of his job to his family by his tterness and criticism of those with whom he works. Often the only thing a lawyer's son knows about the law is that his father is tired and worried from being a lawyer. Or, the chief thing that a salesman's son may remember about his father's work is that the father is discouraged and ill at ease when he comes home from work. No wonder that some sons determine to avoid their father's occupation at all costs.

Do we suffer so that others are made better, not worse, by our attitude towards our predicament? Mrs. Tillie Vanderbur certainly did. A member of a church in Illinois, she had been an invalid for years, suffering from diabetes, arthritis, and the loss of one limb. Yet, it was she who called the indifferent members in that church on the telephone and invited them to attend church. She insisted on entertaining a church circle in her home regularly. She spent much of her time making lace handkerchiefs for her friends, and she taught at least one preacher how to knit. What a difference she made in the spirit of that church — and she was never able to attend a single service.

The need for souls like that is urgent in the church. Too many Christians have not yet learned the meaning of the Christian doctrine of suffering. Even in suffering we may yet do something. Having determined to make others better, not worse, because we suffer, we take the real terror — meaninglessness — out of suffering. Now, we have a purpose. We cannot save ourselves; we can save others.

Ourselves

Our spiritual response to an inevitable situation can take another positive form. We can suffer so that we ourselves become better, not worse, because we suffer. The New Testament says that this is an exact description of what took place in the life of our Lord. "Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered." If that is true of Jesus, how necessary it must be for us.

Fritz Kunkel, a practicing psychiatrist who has written a commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew called *Creation Continues,* writes that our lives may be diagramed by two inverted triangles with the point of each resting on the base of the other. At birth, the base of the triangle representing our physical nature is broad and ready to support the rest of our years. As we grow older and weaker physically, the triangle narrows gradually to a point until at the point of death the physical nature disappears altogether. On the other hand, the triangle representing our spiritual nature is but a point at our birth, but as we grow older, suffer life and gain experience our spiritual nature broadens until at death we have the most to offer God.

Saints of faith are not people who escape suffering altogether, or at most tack it on to the last moments of life. The saints are those who

have learned to accept suffering as the meaning of their lives. Often, suffering is the only language God has left to reach us in our pride and arrogance. How meaningless a life without suffering would be.

There is a story of a queen of France who could not stand the sight of suffering. When she traveled, the roads were cleared for a mile on either side lest the queen see a lame man, a blind man or a hungry child. Yet it was this queen who was known as the cruelest queen in France's history. Protected from suffering, with no feeling she could sign an order which would take the food from the mouths of thousands or mean the death of hundreds. Because she did not suffer life, because she did not dare admit there was suffering in the world, she lost the capacity for love and sympathy.

Communicating God's Will

There is something else we can do when it seems that we can't do anything. Not only can we suffer so others are made better, not worse, because we suffer, and not only can we suffer so we ourselves become better, not worse, because we suffer; we can also let our sufferings communicate God's will to the world.

Almost at once someone will object, "No, that is too much to claim." Many of us can understand how God's will is made known through the Bible or through the church, but how can God use my intolerable situation for his purposes?

Isn't this just what God has been doing in the Bible and in the church all along? So deeply was this truth embedded in the consciousness of the Hebrew prophets that when the time came to proclaim the Messiah, the Hebrew mind was ready, at least more ready than any other people's. Listen to Isaiah of the exile speaking of the Messiah:

> Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, and he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

In the sufferings of the Messiah, God's will found its way into the world. That is a New Testament truth in the Old Testament.

We find this truth alive today. During World War II an American boy was killed by the Japanese on an island in the Pacific. He was the only son of two devoted parents. At first it seemed to this father and mother that the world of love and faith had come to an end. As the months went by, however, their grief began to take another shape. At the war's end this American couple set up a trust fund for the Christian education of Japanese boys studying for the ministry. What a blessing their suffering became! Can we say that God's will for all men did not find a voice in this response to an incurable heartache?

So let the cross speak to our hearts today. Our problem as Christians is not the explanation of why our problems become so big that there seem little we can do about them. Our Christian hope lies in the fact that there are some things we can do when it seems that we can't do anything. We can pluck the thorn of meaninglessness from even a mortal wound. "He saved others; he cannot save himself." We can follow the example of our Lord. He suffered so that others became better, not worse, because of his sufferings. Even he learned obedience because of the things that he suffered. His goodness shines most brightly out of his darkest hour. And God's will was affirmed and proclaimed to all the world through his cross. It is the power of God, it is our Christian joy to preach that same gospel in our helpless hours that never become hopeless.

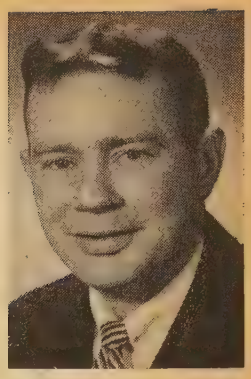
Prayer

ETERNAL God, our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble — help us always to be aware of thy presence, not only in the world about us, but also in the very depths of our souls. Teach us to be grateful for all the experiences of life — for the pain that often alerts us to impending danger, for the strength of character that comes as we face problems and overcome them, and for every true joy and accomplishment in our daily lives.

Strengthen this day our faith in life and in the essential goodness of thee. Teach us anew of Him who did not come to make our lives easy, but to make us equal to life. Let it be said of us each day that we are doing our best to fulfill our assigned task in the building of thy kingdom on earth. Help us to keep steadily in mind the things of life which really do matter — not just our houses and lands, our comfort and pleasure — but truth, honor, justice, without which we are poor indeed.

Make us always sensitive to the vast goodness and opportunities surrounding our lives. Teach us to see beauty in the midst of the common routine and to find some joy in all of life. Give us an ear to the hidden music about us — to the laughter of children, the blessedness of happy memories, and to the quiet comfort of our home. Bless each of us, and fill us with the spirit of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen. *Donald E. Riker, First Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois.*

We Fight the Same Battle, But on New Ground



The Protestant Prodigal

By Anderson D. Clark

THE PROBLEM for the Protestant church in 1959 is not Protestantism's parent, the Roman Catholic Church. The problem for the Protestant church is its own wayward son, modern religious secularism.

Being Protestant is hopefully something more than being a non-Roman Catholic. Protestantism has a decisive position, a position that demands decision. In 16th century Europe the essence of a great religious struggle was formulated by Luther in the doctrine of justification by faith. Actually this is an abbreviation of the full Protestant statement which forced Protestantism out of the Roman church. The full statement was, "A believer is justified by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ." It was this embodiment of truth that sledged out the keystone of the Roman church, the keystone which had supported the great medieval Roman arch that historically spanned one thousand years and culturally spanned the entire Western civilization. The Roman keystone we can formulate this way: "The believer is justified by God through his obedience to the church, God's agency of salvation in the world."

Now, if we peel off some of the theological cover we can say the argument was between salvation as a gift one accepts and salvation as a reward one achieves. To state it in an almost nonreligious way the issue was between these ideas: (1) that which makes life worth itself *comes* to a man *independent* of his efforts to make life worth itself, and (2) that which makes life worth itself comes only to the man who works to make life worth itself.

Morally, the Protestant position was in the 16th century and is in the 20th century just about the most radical thing the ears of man will ever hear. It punctures cherished opinion and violates sensibility. If we understand the radical thing it is saying we understand why the struggle was so intense in the 16th century, why the Romans fought the Protestants as being agents of Satan, and also why the Roman church is no longer a threat to the Protestant church.

Luther and the reformers were saying that the meaning of life, that which makes life worth itself finally does not depend on a man's job, community position, money, clothes, where he lives, what he owns, his religious affiliation or even his morality — but rests finally on whether he accepts the love of God in Jesus Christ offered to all men. And — even more incredible — this love of God in Jesus Christ is a gift without strings attached; there is absolutely, positively nothing a person can do to earn it. In fact if a person tries to earn it, particularly by trying to be good morally, he cuts himself off from it. When the Roman church heard this it screamed: "This is immoral, this is absurd; it makes a mockery of good and makes morality of no consequence. Truly these men are of Satan."

Too Good Not to Be True

But to others — to men who tried to be good and could not, to men who tried to obey the church and could not, to men who found themselves continually failing, continually under moral judgment — this was nothing less than good news. To hear that God loved sinners, that Christ died for men who were yet sinners, that that which makes life worth itself *comes* to a man independent of his effort to make life worth itself — this was something too good not to be true. To these people this was salvation.

By saying that Protestantism's real opponent in 1959 is not the Roman church, the parent of Protestantism, but modern religious secularism, the prodigal son of Protestantism, we mean that present-day Protestantism is its own worst enemy, that the Protestant church has out-Romed Rome, that Protestantism's most powerful product — secularism — vitally represents in the 20th century the position represented by the Roman church in the 16th century. And the clincher is that the stronghold of religious secularism is in the Protestant church.

Let us briefly trace the outstanding characteristic of secularism as a Protestant prodigal, namely,

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its morality. Luther's attack against Rome came about by his discovering what the New Testament was saying, particularly what Paul was saying. He discovered that the great issue of the early church with which Paul had to contend was the matter of moral responsibility. Christianity began as a sect of Judaism. The most natural thing in the world for the early Christian to request of converts was that they become Jews first. And this entailed the ritual act of circumcision. Thus before a person could know the grace of God he had a ritual responsibility to perform, on the basis of which he was reckoned worthy and acceptable.

"No!" Paul shouted, and with his shout he split the early church into fragments. "A man is saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ; there is no intermediate requirement. A man is finally responsible to God and God alone."

Luther fought the same battle but on new ground. "No!" he said, "A man is not saved by obedience to the rules of the church, nor by any ritual responsibility, for there is no *intermediary* between man and God. Man is saved by grace and his responsibility is finally only to God."

Practical Effect

The theme of personal responsibility to God as a response to his gift of love had the very practical effect of giving the Protestant an urgent and continuing God-consciousness. The gospel hymn, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," used an authentic metaphor. To the Protestant God's arms were this available. God saved a man and the only *conceivable response* to such a glorious salvation for the believer was his life personally dedicated to the service of God. Personal moral responsibility to God — *not as a moral obligation* but as a fitting response — became the hallmark of Protestantism. This had two effects. The first effect was that it opened the doors of the church and left the religious man out to live and act in the market place, the world. It abolished the split between the sacred and secular, and stated that it was in the so-called secular that the Christian was to live his Christian life with personal moral responsibility to God for the way he lived it. The second effect was simply that it worked.

Let me mention only one example. The medieval church was very intent upon the distinction of its separation from the world. One of the worldly practices it particularly condemned was the practice of usury, charging interest for the use of money. For some time before the 16th century trade routes were beginning to open up and commerce was beginning to flourish. Capital was desperately needed, but interest on money loaned was condemned. The capitalist infant was in dire need of an ethic that justified interest charging, an ethic that would both give moral sanction and space to grow. Protestantism provided this. If a man was personally morally responsible to God, then nothing was in and of itself evil; in fact, everything could be evaluated by how it was used. Even usury could be used to the glory of God.

Quickly then around this theme of personal moral responsibility clustered all the so-called Protestant virtues — thrift, industriousness, honesty and the like. Soon Protestantism was providing the ethic for the modern world. But then a silent, subtle change took place. One did not need God to practice the Protestant virtues so pragmatically valuable in the modern world. All a person needed to be was personally responsible, and, as a matter of fact, without God things were better.

Why not take the inheritance, leave the father's house and do with it what one wanted? No use having a nagging God to bother the conscience. And with this, secularism on a grand scale was born out of the Protestant home with its hallmark being personal moral responsibility without reference to anyone or anything except oneself. The Protestant ethic based on justification by faith produced a cultural son called Secular, a son which is now prodigal, a son which has accepted the personal moral responsibility of Protestantism but has abandoned the religious understanding of grace which makes the ethic bearable.

Thus today we have a tyrannical secular morality — more tyrannical than Rome ever was — that makes demands on people without providing the power to meet the demands. What is this tyranny? It is an understanding of life that says that that which makes life worth itself comes to a man who works to make *worth* itself. It is the very same position of the Roman church in the 16th century, except that it has no God even to misunderstand.

How do we know secular moralism? It is what squeezes our souls every day. It is what people mean when they refer to their lives being so over-organized, meaning they are literally afraid to say "No" to social demands. It is the pressure pushing us to find status with a larger and better house, to have a new car and better clothes. It is the intolerable demand to be nice, to be pleasant — the tyrannical pressure to be active, to be social, to conform.

Now note this — and note well — these demands are not what makes secular morality so demanding. Organizations are fine, new cars are perfectly all right, and it is nice to have people nice. Without basic conformity no life is possible at all. The thing that makes it theologically and spiritually damnable is that the morality provides no power to meet the demands nor strength to say "No."

Everywhere we hear the message: "Life's worth is dependent on your obedience to the demands

(Continued on page 21)

"Picked Up, Warmed and Fed," It Has Power to Change the World

The Arterial Word

By Johnstone G. Patrick

I am the way, the truth, and the life. John 14:6.

HAVE YOU ever read Katherine Butler Hathaway's autobiography, *The Little Locksmith*? It is a powerful revelation of spiritual truth, won by experience of the two worlds—the world seen and the world unseen. No bitterness mars this beautiful work, and yet how easily such an intimate narrative could have been made all but unbearable! It is "a joy forever."

In the chapter dealing with her childhood, Katherine tells of the immense power and mystery of words.

> Five or six times since I was born I have heard a sentence spoken that sounded as if it were made out of an entirely different substance from the substance of ordinary sentences, as if it were carved out of a piece of strange foreign wood. These sentences had no visible connection with what had been said before or with anything that came after them. They were undecipherable fragments, like meteorites from another world .... Those sentences were made of what George Meredith, on one crucial page of *The Amazing Marriage,* called "arterial words." They spurted out of the body involuntarily, coming from some hidden and much deeper source than ordinary speech. In our family, those arterial sentences were instantly treated as if they had not been spoken. They were not answered, never repeated, and never referred to again. They were something not wanted, but something terrifyingly alive. They were foundling sentences, left on a doorstep .... We all looked the other way, we pretended we hadn't heard, and those parentless sentences were left to starve and perish, because, picked up and warmed and fed, they might have had the power to change our whole lives. . . ."[1]

In order to understand what is meant by "arterial words," we must know something about the function of arteries in the human body. "Arteries," according to a small first-aid manual, "carry the rich, fresh, red blood from the heart, distributing it through an intricate network of capillaries to every part of the body, and thence by further capillary networks and veins the impure blood is carried back to the heart and the cleansing-station of the lungs."

How many words of mine, I wonder, are arterial words, pumping out strong, clean truths from the hidden depths of my being into the body of mankind's thought! Never was the need of uttering such words greater than it is today. How many are the occasions when we encounter those who need the word that lightens the load, challenges in reasoned reproof or strikes home with steadying power. A word uttered with understanding love can go home to the heart of human folly or social injustice or racial and international hatred. There is need for the arterial word that will convince and convert, help and heal, save and inspire. There is need for the word of life that will outlast the present death in which so many of our little days are being spent. Is it ever on our lips, this arterial word?

No speaker worth the name was ever indifferent to the effect of his message, and Jesus Christ was no exception. "Never man spake like this man." He studied the reactions of his hearers with wistful solicitude, always seeking to see his words home to their hearts. What set him apart from all other speakers can be stoutly stated in terms of the arterial words he uttered. "He took no pains to be recorded," wrote Pearce Carey, "but trusted his words to the winds. They clung to men's memories by their sheer rightness and brightness, their simplicity and profundity. They were so arresting, vivid, dramatic."[2] "They were born," says Otto Borchert, in his book *The Original Jesus,* "to be graven in the memory." Dmitri Merezhkovsky, the great Russian mystic, calls them "the most living and least book-learned words of men."[3] Words were for him audible tokens of inaudible realities.

Among the arterial utterances of Jesus which St. John's Gospel has treasured for us, there is none more powerful than "I am the way, the truth,

[1] Copyright 1942, 1943 by Coward-McCann, Inc., New York. Used by permission.

[2] S. Pearce Carey, *Jesus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1940). Used by permission.

[3] Dmitri Merezhkovsky, *Jesus Manifest,* translated by Edward Gellibrand (London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1935). Used by permission.

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and the life." Such a sharp, simple sentence carries us into the realm of religious ideas. Its very terms —way, truth, life — bear us beyond the borderline of definition. Each of them opens up vistas of meaning, full of thoughts that "do wander through eternity." Yet we may conclude from such a claim that Christianity inculcates a character, a doctrine and experience, and that all three are inextricably bound up in Christ's own person. For he does not merely say, "I reveal the way, I explain the truth, I impart the life"; but he declares, "I am all these in myself. The perfect ideal of goodness, it is I: follow me. The open secret of knowledge, it is I: learn of me. The source and spring of life, it is I: if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

The Way and the Going

Baffled, frightened and worn-out with wandering, we ask wistfully as Philip did, "How can we know the way?" And Jesus says to us what he said so long ago to his inquiring friend and follower, "I am the way." Since, however, a way is always related to a clearly-defined destination, we ask him further, "The way where to?"

Jesus is the way, and as the way he is related to a specific and particular destination. If your ambition is to amass a million dollars, then Christ is not the way you should be walking. If your plan is to achieve political power or popular prestige, then Christ is not the way for you. If your purpose is to promote for yourself a placid, pain-free existence, then Christ is not the way you should choose to take. But if your goal is God and genuine goodness, then Christ is the way. It is as the old hymn has plainly put it:

> Life with its way before thee lies,
> Christ is the path and Christ the prize.

It should fortify us to know that the path for us through life's labyrinth is not any matter of dubious speculation or abstruse definition. It does not need to be discovered and mapped out anew. It is a road already traced on earth by the print of Christ's own nail-torn feet; its milestones are his own beatitudes; its guidepost is his cross.

The ideal of character, the final standard of conduct is Christ himself as he shines on us from the pages of the New Testament. The fair form that meets us there is not vague and shadowy, but clear and distinct, unlike anyone else in the world. His compassion and courage, his burning tenderness, awful pity and measureless sacrifice — they blend into one arresting, conquering personality, whereby we know him to be God's way in the world, the one sure way along which the human soul can travel to its true home.

So much of the terror and pain of our existence arises out of the strange "waylessness" of the modern world. We cannot trace any line of coherent purpose in our lives or in the wider life of mankind. Often we feel like lost children who have missed the way. Men ask the question, "What is progress?" and wrangle wrathfully and despairingly over many answers. But Christians have solved the secret. For each true pilgrim of eternity, progress means going further and deeper into life in Christ. And the pilgrimage grows simple as our thoughts are turned away from our stumbling feet to fix themselves on him who still says, "I am the way." For it is Christ who makes himself at once our path and our prize, our character and our companion, our guide and our goal.

The Truth and the Knowing

Christianity has to do not only with a character, but also with a doctrine. Jesus claims to be the one truth for us to know. When he declares, "I am the truth," amid this world's shifting shadows and illusions, he is telling us that to know him is to enter into the secret of the heart of God.

In his brilliant biography of C. P. Scott, Dr. J. L. Hammond quotes from a letter a couple of sentences that deserve to be remembered as long as time lasts. The illustrious editor of the *Manchester Guardian* speaks of the function of a newspaper: "Its primary office is the gathering of news. At the peril of its soul it must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of Truth suffer wrong."[4]

The basic principle of journalism has never been better stated, and Scott's declaration may be applied to many fields other than that of journalism. The unclouded face of truth must not suffer wrong in our preaching, our everyday conversation, our theological thinking, and in our dealings with ourselves and others.

"Where there's a will, there's a way" — and also a truth. God's will is God's love, and the will and the way and the truth of God are fully interpreted in the incarnation, passion and resurrection of his Son. When we sin against God, we are not just breaking laws or fighting a force that is stronger than we are and must win, but we are breaking a Heart, we are creating an ugly dark cloud between ourselves and the face of truth.

The Life and the Living

Christianity involves not only a character and a doctrine, but an up-to-date, everyday experience as well. And here is Christ's inmost thought concerning himself: "I am the life."

From the lips of anyone but him we could not accept without rebellion so staggering a claim. But what does Christ intend us to understand when he affirms, "I am the life"? To grasp the fullness of this arterial sentence we must recollect that it fell from his lips "the same night in which he was betrayed," when he had already entered the valley

[4] J. L. Hammond, *C. P. Scott of the Manchester Guardian* (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1934). Used by permission.

f the shadow of death. Once before he had spoken milar words, when he stood by the open grave of friend — "I am the Resurrection and the Life," ıe vital essence and energy which dying cannot estroy. Once again, long afterwards, the same ord came from a voice which was "as the sound f many waters." Out of the fullness of his king-om and power and glory, the Lord spoke to his ervant John saying, "I am the First, and the Last, nd the Living One." For that victorious Life, hich was willingly laid down for men, reigns now n the throne of God.

We must understand that this saying sums up, armonizes and completes the thoughts of Christ s our Way and Christ as our Truth. Such fact is xpressed by Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her oem, "That Thy Way May Be Known Upon arth":

> . . . Thou aspire, aspire
> From henceforth for me! Thou who hast Thyself
> Endured this fleshhood, knowing how as a soaked
> And sucking vesture it can drag us down
> And choke us in the melancholy Deep,
> Sustain me, that with Thee I walk these waves,
> Resisting! — breathe me upward, Thou in me
> Aspiring, who art the way, the truth, the life, —
> That no truth henceforth seem indifferent,
> No way to truth laborious, and no life,
> Not even this life I live, intolerable!

Life stands for our innermost being and essence; lthough it is Life indeed only as taught by the Truth and as exercised in the Way. So Christians eceive Christ not merely to form their character nd rule their conduct and to mold their thinking, ut to dwell in the very citadel of their souls. They find him to be more than an example to mitate, more than a perfect teacher to trust. They xperience him as a vital energy within, cleansing, mpowering and inspiring. A Christian is a person nto whom Christ infuses his own personality, so hat new powers and passions, new manners and notives, are stirred and quickened at the very prings of being. He becomes our life when we llow him to impart himself to us, to kindle within is the flame of faith and undying hope, and to hed abroad in our hearts the love of God.

Our Own Worst Enemies

Christianity, then, involves a character, a doc-rine and an experience. In that classic of Chris-ian devotion, *De Imitatione Christi,* Thomas à Kempis has said, "Without a way, there is no going; without a truth, there is no knowing; with-ut a life, there is no living." And the Way and he Truth and the Life which are Christ's cannot e found outside of him. Apart from him we can o nowhere that will seem worth going, we can elieve nothing that will seem worth believing, ve can do nothing that will seem worth doing, nd we can be nothing that will seem worth being. udged in the white light of reality, whether we re in our twenties or forties or sixties or eighties, you and I are our own worst enemies if we leave this arterial word of Jesus "on the doorstep . . . and look the other way, pretending we haven't heard." For, "picked up and warmed and fed," it has the power to change our whole lives, and the life of our world.

Prodigal

(Continued from page 18)

placed on you, dependent on the job you have, the status you achieve, the prestige you possess, the place you live, the church you attend." But against this secular moralism the Protestant faith shouts, "Rubbish! This will choke off and dry up the souls of people. No one can try to justify his life without his soul being broken. Life's worth is a gift, a gift of love that justifies man and gives him power to live."

The prodigal son left home. He did not need his father. In a far country he surrendered his inheritance. Finally, he exhausted his resources and had nothing left. Then it was he came to himself, remembered his father and returned to him to ask if he could just have something to eat. When the son left, the father did not go after him. He knew it was no use to argue with a sophisticated age that was flexing its moral muscle. He knew there was no use going after his son saying, "You need me." His son would only laugh. The father could not help his son until he confessed his spiritual bankruptcy and returned. The father could not answer a question his son was not asking. It was only when his son asked the question his father could answer that he did answer.

Secularism, the Protestant Prodigal, is someday going to return. People are going to ask, "Isn't there more to life than an endless search for happiness, something more than this ritual rat race of social moralism, something more than this soul-shrinking activism, these soul-squeezing pressures? Isn't there a God who loves people who try to do everything and be everything and can't? Isn't there a God somewhere who loves people who are moral failures, a God somewhere who loves people who are sick and tired of trying — a God who loves sinners?"

In a new form — in different words — someday — not a Catholic, but a Protestant is going to say, "Yes. Accept God's free gift of love — the only basis for an authentic morality." Then, anyone with ears to hear will have to celebrate and show his joy. For to hear that God loves sinners, that Christ died for men who are yet sinners, that that which makes life worth itself *comes* to a man independent of his effort to make life worth itself — this is still news too good not to be true!

The Theology of Laughter

By William E. Albright, Jr.

JOHN OSBORNE, one of England's so-called "angry young men," recently assailed the church:

> During the past fifty years, the Church has repeatedly ducked every moral issue that has been thrown at its head—poverty, unemployment, fascism, war, South Africa, the H-Bomb, and so on . . . . After half a century of watching groups of wealthy theologians publicly turning their back on Jesus, the British public slowly began to realize that the bishops were just playing another word game, like the politicians. . . .
>
> Every day on the radio, in the press, and on television, the Church hawked around its Jesus Figure like a vacuum cleaner, but nobody felt inclined to buy a machine that not only failed to beat, sweep, or clean, but actually made a nice mess as well. It has JESUS written on the bag, but the bag contained only the air of another bunch of overpaid liars. . . . Like so many other English Institutions, the Church was beginning to lose its comic value.*

"The Church was beginning to lose its comic value." Is the church losing her capacity to laugh at herself? Do we have a theology for laughter? In our wedding ceremony, the minister holds up the ring and says: "This ring is outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual bond which unites two hearts in endless love." Do we consider laughter an outward sign of an inward grace?

Though the word "laughter" is never used in relationship to Jesus, there are several evidences that Jesus laughed. He was a frequent guest at gay parties. Does one invite a dour-faced person who never laughs to a gay party unless one is exchanging a social courtesy? Look at the labels which were pinned on Jesus — "a wine bibber" and "gluttonous man" — labels which come from those who resent a man who eats, drinks, laughs and has all the appearances of enjoying life.

Jesus was a friend of the "average man." We in the church know the difficulty of winning the so-called average man. He is not won by a "killjoy." He likes a vital, exuberant, radiant person. Have we lost multitudes because we have lost the radiance of the gospel? Jesus had it; the crowds heard him gladly. And Jesus was a friend of children, so much so that once the disciples thought they had to pry children away from him. But Jesus received them. He raised the price tag on children. Children like a man who laughs.

The Parables

Jesus must have laughed when he told his stories. Can you imagine a man straining his water for a gnat, and then drinking a camel with its two humps going down the mouth and then passing the adam's apple without noticing it? Could Jesus have told this story without a sense of humor?

Or could you imagine his telling the story about a man trying to remove a speck of dust from his brother's eye while a plank is hanging out his own? Or a man going to the trouble to light a lamp and then hiding it under the bed instead of putting it on a lampstand? Or a man who had all his children tucked in for the night hearing a man knocking on the door at midnight? Who does this man think he is? But the man kept knocking. And Jesus must have laughed as he told his audience that the man got the bread not because the neighbor wanted to give it to him, but because of his persistence.

Jesus told the story of the three men who made excuses. One man could not come because he had bought a piece of land and had to go see it. If you don't see the humor here, make a list of people you know who will buy a piece of property without first seeing it. The second man had bought a set of oxen and had to try them out. How many modern-day farmers do you see working at night time, and how much more efficient are tractors than oxen? Now, I grant you, to the American male, the third man's excuse sounds a bit more reasonable. The American woman exerts her influence, and it is taken for granted. But in the Jewish household the male was to make the major decisions, and even if he didn't he was not likely to broadcast

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* John Osborne, "They Call It Cricket," *Declaration*, edited by Tom Maschler (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1958). Used by permission.

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he fact. You can almost hear the chuckles as esus told this parable.

But what about those who say, "Jesus was a nan of sorrow"? Let us acknowledge that he was. And yet, as the cross loomed before his path, he dvised his disciples: "Be of good cheer, for I have vercome the world." One of the gospel writers oints out: "But for the joy that was set before im, he endured the cross." A man can be a man f sorrows and still be radiant.

His faith was contagious. It seemed to be part f his legacy willed to the disciples at Pentecost, for turned their despairing moods into such ecstacy hat they were accused of being drunk with new ine. But there is a difference. Recently I was reeted on the telephone by a jubilant, feminine oice saying, "Is this the Welch Liquor Store?" I ad to point out the difference and found myself n apostolic succession with St. Peter when I said: We dispense not spirits, but the Spirit."

Practical Uses

Let us turn to some practical uses of Christian umor and laughter. First, it helps us to laugh at urselves. We are more than animals. An animal an't laugh. We are not yet angels. An angel oesn't need to laugh. But man does! We have tendency to put ourselves at the center of the niverse. We don't belong there. Humor helps s to laugh at ourselves and conquer our pretense.

If we just keep laughing, of course, our humor educes us to meaninglessness. If, however, we are noved to acts of contrition, our humor is Christian. There is always the possibility that humor will nake us humble. And it is one of the best solvents or the grit of irritation which gets in the cogs f life.

Secondly, a practical use of laughter is possible n our relationships with other people. Often aughter works where cold logic fails. A neighbor- ng minister of mine was trying to quiet a mob hich was yelling for segregation; when he tried n egg was bounced off the side of his face. He opped, looked his adversary in the eye and said: Why don't you bring some of those eggs over to ne parsonage, and we'll fry them and talk over his thing." The crowd laughed. That night they id meet in the church to talk over common roblems.

We are always trying to nag people about their ersonal habits. Sometimes humor will work. nce Lincoln was being escorted on a muddy oad by a soldier who cursed the roads frequently. Mr. Lincoln tapped him on the shoulder, and ked: "Are you an Episcopalian?" "No, I'm a Methodist. Why?" "You cuss like Secretary eward and he is a vestryman in the Episcopalian hurch." Possibly the soldier did not give up ussing, but Mr. Lincoln's method was better than e usual admonishments we tend to offer.

We preach sermons against the idea that people put the hope of the world in political methods. One cartoonist pictures two angels on a cloud, one of them about to blow a horn. The other grabs his arm, and says: "Hold it, Gabriel. It looks like they are going to have another summit meeting."

Little Rock has been in the news. One night one of Jack Paar's guests commented on the question of how to get a star on the American flag for Alaska by suggesting that it take Arkansas' place. To me this suggested the profound truth that a state cannot expect the honor of statehood without also accepting the responsibility of statehood. Many Arkansans thought otherwise and wired in protest. It may, however, help some more profound Arkansans to get their second wind and stand up and be counted.

There is one main difference between just plain humor and Christian humor. Secular humor leaves the object of its laughter as a laughing stock. Christian humor must do more. Once the pretense is removed, the Christian must offer his hand in helpfulness. Jesus, breaking through the pretense of the man at the pool, went on from the penetrating question "Wilt thou be made whole?" to "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." Christian humor must do the same.

Thirdly, Christian humor can bring us closer to God. As we laugh away our pretenses, we can in contrition turn to God. We would hope humor would turn to humility. And we would hope that we could learn the true meaning of "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God." Leslie Weatherhead tells of being at a home where a saintly minister died, and noticing near the man's bed two publications, the Bible and *Punch*, one denoting faith, the other humor. There is a cohesiveness about these two virtues. Sometimes the Christian speaks in humor. Sometimes faith is the only language that will do.

There are ultimate times, however, when humor's greatest function is to step aside for faith. At the cross, the only humor was derision which came from one of the malefactors, and there was no semblance of Christian humor in it. Jesus' humor had been swallowed up in faith, and he prayed: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Thus Reinhold Niebuhr says that laughter belongs in the outer courts of religion; it echoes in the sanctuary, but in the holy of holies it is swallowed up in prayer and faith.

Thus, if laughter is in the vestibule of our contemporary Christianity, it is on the way to the altar where it can be consecrated. It helps us personally when it changes our pretense to contrition. It helps us in human relations when it enables us to get our second wind. And it will help us in our relationship to God, if at the moment of crisis, it gives way to faith instead of derision.

Let's Run the Church Like a Business—On Faith!

By Robert E. Peterson

IT IS MY privilege to be the minister of a new church now in the throes of a building program. The congregation I serve is young, vigorous, dedicated and — crazy! Crazy because we have defied the sacred cows of banking collateral and accepted as our security the words of Jesus, especially at the point where he launches out into his dream-world based on the primacy of loving faith: "faith as of a mustard seed," "faith to move mountains," "whatsoever ye ask in my name," "greater things than these shall ye do." The congregation is a little over two years old but we have been in the mood to build for over eight months. Why haven't we built sooner? Because we did not meet certain minimum standards of financial security. We were naturally disappointed when our building program was delayed one month, two months, three months — eight months. But for the most part we fell in line with that which was required of us by our sponsoring agency and certain lending institutions. We grew slowly, laboriously and came to look at every new family as dollar signs rather than children of God.

When the day came that any further delay was unintelligent in view of the law of diminishing returns, we launched out. We had already discarded the possibility of borrowing money from any single lending agency because it required having at least one-third in cash and we did not have the resources to raise that much in a short time. If we wanted to delay several years rather than several months we could have done it. But we had the idea that our program would only be a partially adequate program until we could have our own buildings available to us seven days a week. Our alternative was to float a church bond issue which required no cash reserve and did not involve mortgaging our property (which is not paid off anyway). The bonds we chose are revenue bonds that pay 5 per cent simple interest per year.

From our experience with these revenue bonds we have learned some very interesting things. We are selling our bonds all right, but the few refusals to buy point up the absurd incongruities of church finance.

In the first place we had to go to bonds because nobody would lend us 100 per cent of our building cost. Why? Well, the answers are familiar enough and look good on the surface but to us they seemed totally lacking in judgment. "It's not good business," we were told. "You must have more reserves than you do. Until you're more stable you're simply not ready to build a church." Or — "Think of all the extra interest you'll pay. You should have at least one-third in cash and you must mortgage your property. What! You're property isn't even paid for? Get out of my office and quit wasting my time." And we did.

Fringe Organization?

Is the church a fringe organization with such tenuous resources and temporary benefits that it has to prove itself every time it wishes to expand? Many act like this were so.

Let's look at the first phrase, "It's not good business." A minister hears that so often he is tempted to believe it. Somebody always wants to run the church like a business. All right, so do I. And what business ever went anywhere without expanding, largely on faith? The businesses that just sat pat and waited for a miracle to happen are businesses no longer with us. The successful businesses of our day are those who went out on a limb and made a miracle happen. They had faith — faith in their product, faith in their ability to produce the product, faith in the value of the product that would make it marketable. Does none of this apply to the church? If we keep our present conservative policies concerning the establishment of churches in operation we will go out of business as fast as we originally came into being.

Now what about reserves? If a small church needs $75,000 to build, they can put $25,000 in the bank in three years. Sure, they have earned interest on that money. But have they earne enough on it to offset the potenti income if they had been in their buil ings for three years? Hardly! Capit lying in a bank drawing 2¼ to 4 p cent is not working for the churc And it is certainly not witnessing the community in terms of a churc program. In fact, it may be doi just the opposite, for it says, "W want to build a church and as soo as we can do it on a cash basis, we do it. Faith? What's that?"

Interest Bugaboo

We have already alluded to t interest bugaboo. It is true that pa ing interest on 100 per cent of a loa will amount to more than paying i terest on 75 or 50 per cent of a loa But not using money for that f which it was given is not only po business, it is shoddy stewardship a we have got enough of that as it If we waited to start businesses, bui homes and buy cars until we cou do it on a cash basis, we would back in the Stone Age instead of t present stone-head age. A lot of pe ple worry about the economy of o country because it is largely on pape So what? It has produced the highe standard of living in the history man. The only trouble is that has lulled us into a false sense security. The irony is that we ha built on faith, but now we want ignore what has brought us here a do everything on a completely faithl basis. And when we approach t church in this way, it is not on damaging, it is blasphemous! Goo ways can be deferred — but never d feated. Our archaic financial a proach to the establishing a building of churches has deferr God's purposes. But some church move out on the limb anyway becau they know God cannot be defeate Unless we are willing to climb o on the limb and in a sense saw off behind us, we are only kiddi ourselves when we call ourselves church. We are then not a chur at all but a "Society for the Preser tion of Secure Security."

Our church bonds are reven bonds which means that the prope is not involved in the mortga Thus we are told we cannot sell

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ROBERT E. PETERSON, *minister of Western Hills Christian Church, San Antonio, Texas, holds bachelor's degrees from the University of Oregon, Northwest Christian College and Brite College of the Bible. His profession, prior to entering the ministry, was in radio and television.*

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banks or savings and loan associations because they must have the mortgage on the property. Presumably this is because the property represents the only real value. Is that really so? Of course not. The main asset of a church is its income offerings which reflect the depth of faith and commitment of its members. Income does not reflect the wealth of a church, only its faith. The church has proven to be one of the most stable income-producing institutions. When people believe in their church, there is not one chance in a billion that it will have trouble with its income. We believe in our church and although we are not setting the world on fire with our stewardship, we are giving at a rate almost triple the national per capita average for Christian churches. It is this income we are mortgaging through our bonds, for actually only our income is stable enough to mortgage. Our property is valuable *now,* and since most banks shy away from the thought of having to foreclose on a church (come to think of it, when did they have to?), it would seem that they would welcome an investment which allowed them to escape that remote possibility of foreclosure and have a mortgage on the only tangible asset of the church — its income. In the final analysis, it is the income and not real estate values or property worth that makes our economy go. Without income there is no value in real estate because nobody could then afford it. This seems so absurdly obvious that it is almost embarrassing to mention it. This brings me to the conclusion that the bankers are the impractical economists and the ministers are the realists. The bankers put all their eggs into the real estate or property basket; the ministers put theirs in the faith of their people in God as reflected primarily in the church income.

Income Basis

Income is actually the basis for all values. Income goes up, so do prices and real estate values; income comes down and real estate falls. A savings and loan official told me that his company was prevented by charter from investing in anything but homes. He could not even invest in such "slippery" items as A.T.&T. stock. Ah, homes, the bulwark of our society. This is the ultimate in financial security? What happens to those homes when income fails? Oh yes, they are backed by V.A. and F.H.A. which in turn is backed by government which in turn gets its money from taxes which in turn comes from income — no income, no taxes; no taxes, no government; no government, no V.A. and F.H.A. and no V.A. and F.H.A., no homes. Now where is the security? It still boils down to income, and income is exactly what our church is putting on the line to build our church. Incidentally, when the banker brought up how many churches had defaulted in the depression, I asked if they had gone out of business. "No," he replied reluctantly. "What did they do about their debts?" I asked. His answer, "They compromised." "Then they weren't total losses?" "No." "And how about all the savings and loan companies and banks that never reopened their doors?" But that is an embarrassing question to ask a man whose whole financial technique is one of "scare" and who to scare continually harks back to the depression.

Best Investment

Hark back then! Church members gave 3 per cent of their income to the church during the depression; now they are giving 1 per cent. Anyway you turn, you are faced with the practical fact that *churches are the best investment we have but the hardest to get financed* because of all the old-wives' tales and banking phobias. Show me a church that failed and I will show you a church in the middle of an entire community that failed or moved away. There is no other factor than this unless it be a church so independent of others that it begins with the denial of Christian brotherhood. And our church is a joint project of all the Christian Churches of San Antonio.

It is true that churches get heavily in debt financially. We are straining at the leash in order to get more in debt than we previously figured. We started out with $75,000 plans and are now faced with a $100,000 proposition. And we are going to do it. After all, we are in debt anyway, a far more important debt than dollars and cents. We are in debt for our lives, our faith, our talents and our time. Try paying that off! The financial debt is a minor item when seen in the total picture of man's indebtedness to his God and his fellow men.

Lagging Badly

The Christian Churches are lagging badly in new church building. We are not even keeping pace with the population growth. And it is no wonder when we add to the hurdles of the secular world, the conservative policies of our own building programs. We are on the threshold of launching a ten-year program emphasizing the establishment of new churches. If we continue on our course of conservatism and nonbusinesslike approach, the next ten years will be a farce. Part of the delay is with many boards of church extension; not with the personnel who in the final analysis must administrate the policies handed to them by their board of directors which in turn is made up of local churchmen, but with the shortsightedness of Christian investors, big and small, who continue to swallow the poison of faithlessness. These boards of church development have to be conservative with loans because we have never believed in new church establishment enough to support it with our money so they could expand. We have not been convinced th the church is important or uniq or here to stay.

The boards of church extensio send qualified, dedicated men to he a church in its building progra They rightly say, build a first-cla building on first-class property ar get a first-class minister. But do on a third-class faith! What are afraid of? Can we really overexter ourselves in God's work? It is n the program that gets overextended - the people are just undernourishe spiritually.

Wrong Collateral

We have been asking for the wro collateral in building churches. W have looked at real estate inste of people, cash instead of pledg words instead of prayers and apa from the people and their faith, the is no security. Let's run the chur like a business — on faith; and sin it is the most important business the world we need more faith. Th is our collateral, this is your securi when you buy our church bonds. is time our people quit revering t church and start building it and wor ing for it. We are not buildin something as tenuous as saloons du ing prohibition — we are buildin churches for a sick world. And o foundation is none other than t foundation no man can lay: "th which has been laid which is Jes Christ."

Pulpit Calendar

Aug. 6 — The Transfiguration.
Aug. 9 — 12th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 16 — 13th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 23 — 14th Sunday after Pentecost.
Aug. 30 — Festival of Christ the King.
Sept. 6 — Labor Sunday.
Sept. 7 — Labor Day.
Sept. 13 — 17th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 20 — 18th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 27 — 19th Sunday after Pentecost.
Sept. 27-Oct. 4 — Christian Education Week.
Oct. 4 — World-Wide Communion.
Oct. 11 — Men and Missions Day.
Oct. 11-18 — Churchmen's Week.
Oct. 18 — Laymen's Sunday.
Oct. 25 — World Order Sunday.
Oct. 31 — Reformation Day.

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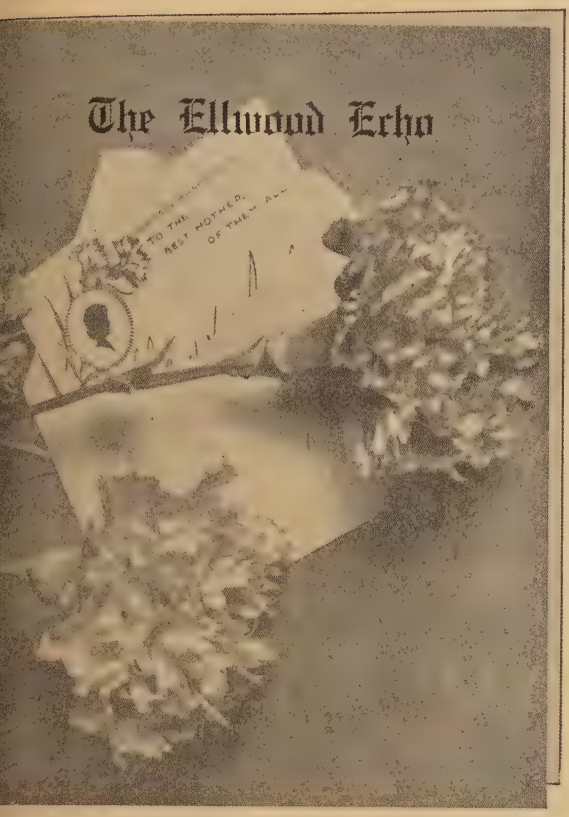

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Book Reviews

THE CREATIVE YEARS. *By Reuel L. Howe. Seabury. $3.50.*

ONE OF the most able and influential preacher-teachers in the nation has observed that among the hundreds of "religious" books which are published in a given year, there are perhaps a dozen which are worth buying and digesting. Even by that high standard, *The Creative Years* deserves wide circulation among ministers, teachers, parents and others who are interested in a clear and practical understanding of the vital application of Christian insights in the relationships of everyday life. In a unique way, it succeeds in bridging the gap between the ivory tower and the business world, family living and those interpersonal relations from which derive the existential tensions and frustrations of modern man.

Reuel Howe has the ability to express with amazing clarity the deep insights which are the fruits of long and sympathetic association with troubled persons and an intimate acquaintance with the Christian gospel. He makes it clear that while the man who has been accustomed to measure his life by worldly standards may find it difficult to obey the strivings of the better man within him, Christian love is both applicable in all kinds of human relationships and able to meet the varying demands which are made upon it, without any compromise of either its dignity or its power.

This is no shallow prescription for self-help. It is a sensitive, humble and intelligent offer of guidance in the discovery that "the means of creativity is within the reach of each of us" and that whatever years remain to us may be transformed into creative years. — *Jack H. Manley, Court Street Baptist Church, Portsmouth, Virginia.*

INVITATION TO COMMUNE. *By Charles Ray Goff. Abingdon. $1.75.*

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. *By Carl Glover. Abingdon. $2.25.*

THE PROTESTANT churches are under great obligation to quicken and give meaning to worship. "What service in the church is as futile as Holy Communion if it fails to communicate? Conversely is there any service comparable to Communion when the congregation enters into it with the spirit of righteousness?" Dr. Goff, the minister of the Chicago Temple who preaches to the passing throng in the heart of a metropolis, gathers up the individual phrases in the traditional Words of Invitation to the Holy Communion and interprets them in very simple and human language. His illustrations are homely, and ordinary men who listen walk out doubtless with their spirits edified. The minister who uses this little volume will find it the starting point for a whole series of meditations on the Lord's Supper. He will be reminded that preaching must communicate. He will also discover by inference that the perfect use of ritual of the age-old words of worship bring healing and beauty.

Carl Glover, a gifted minister, makes his last contribution in this little book of prayers for public worship. It is a good book for the minister's desk. Here are prayers for the choir before the service, for the occasional situations, as well as for the service of worship. Their form is traditional. The literary and liturgical bent of the author are evident though the language is his own. This also will provoke the thoughtful reader to prepare his own prayers. It will remind him that adequate expression is an essential for significant worship. Public prayer can gather up the prayers of the people only through noble expression that is the product of both tradition and deep meditation upon the contemporary. — *Wilford H. Evans, First Congregational Church, Sheboygan, Wisconsin.*

A GUIDE TO CHURCH BUILDING AND FUND RAISING. *By Martin Anderson. Augsburg. $5.00.*

NOT every well-meant how-to-do-it book is successful; when the intention is as good as Anderson's effort, one regrets to report on its failure. The production is handsome and the price is modest in an overpriced field. The author, a church official who has supervised the building of many churches, knows the common sense aspects of the field, but the poetry of building escapes him entirely. Stylistically, the book is a sequence of brief and colorless sentences, as strong in their logic as they are blanched in character and form. The selection of churches is irregular and thus not too helpful as a taste-builder. Churches by Dow, Belluschi, Saarinen, and Thorshov & Cerny find company with many "engineered" designs. But when one looks at the alternatives, at the company this one will find on shelves, it must be said that it is as useful as any other now on the market. It may inform but it can hardly inspire building committees and fund raisers.

A SECOND READER'S NOTEBOOK. By *Gerald Kennedy. Harper. $4.95.*

IF YOU must commit acts of piracy, commit them from the treasury of Gerald Kennedy. This "notebook" contains 1200 entries under 400 headings; most of them will find the way into sermons or talks or Sunda church bulletins. While the practic of snatching illustrations from som one else's reading is always a litt precarious — they appear out of co text, like cut-flowers — still it shoul be said that the scope of Kennedy reading is so wide and his eye fo the potential of an out-of-the-wa quotation so alert that the reade can approach this anthology wit confidence.

ENCYCLOPEDIA FOR CHURCH GROU LEADERS. *By Lee J. Gable. Associ tion. $7.95.*

WERE this book what its titl sounds as if it is, we woul hesitate to recommend it. Wha church group leaders do not nee is one more book on "how to. . . But this book is something else, an we can recommend it with some e thusiasm. It is an anthology of wri ings on religious education and grou life. Most of the selections probe th reasons why and provide theoretic background for Christian nurtur The roll call of authors includ names of significant Protestant lea ers: Pittenger, Robert McAfee Brow Georgia Harkness, Reuel Howe, Ro Snyder, and is a Who's Who in today religious education. Every concei able aspect of the learning process discussed; anyone whose library is b coming crowded can place this E cyclopedia on his shelf and remov a dozen other books in the field.

THE POWER OF GOD IN A PARISH PR GRAM. *By Joseph E. McCabe. Wes minster. $3.50.*

DR. McCABE is now President Coe College in Cedar Rapid Iowa. When he was minister of th Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hi in Philadelphia he led his congreg tion through a sequence of exper ences all pointing in one directio meaningful church membership. Th account takes on a daring charact because it tells not "how to" but "ho we did" in a realm where observatio and analysis are open to all. We ha not been to Chestnut Hill to chec on the durability of the experimen but we would take heart even if th describe a dream world.

For McCabe's dream is one whi must see reality in a day like ou With Bonhoeffer he rebelled again "cheap grace;" against mass-evangelis and mass-manipulation he stressed t personal ministry. "It is only throug . . . particularity that our Lord c give any detailed expression of t universality of his love" (Willia

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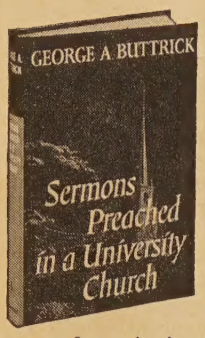

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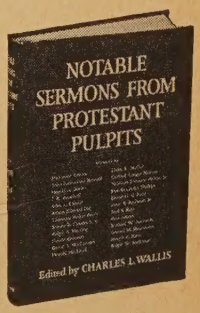

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Temple). In a day of promotion and programs he worked toward disciplined apostleship. American enough to include in every chapter an account of the successes and results, this book is Christian enough that one does not even care. The attempts have their own integrity. You can hardly get that kind any more.

A THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY. *By Hendrik Kraemer. Westminster. $3.00.*

ROBERT FROST has invited us all to a one-man revolution, the only kind of revolution that is coming. If it happens in twentieth-century Christianity and if Hendrik Kraemer is correct, the new Martin Luther will be a layman. With convincing historical warrant the Dutch Reformed lay theologian states his case. The idea of the universal priesthood of believers has never yet, even now, been seriously tried. If it were, nothing including the gates of hell could prevail against the church. The moment when this could have happened was the sixteenth century reformation. But in its heightening of the office of preaching it drew dangerous distinctions between clergy and laity.

Again, if Kraemer is correct as I believe he is, nothing very exciting is going to happen on the ecclesiastical scene today, either, unless our polity comes up to the pitch of the New Testament impetus and makes mor room for the layman. In several brie chapters the author details the ou lines of a theology of the laity. Hi criticisms of latent and persisten clericalism are telling. His hope after twenty centuries, seem to b beyond hope. One way to nurtur it is to read the book; it is one o the few of this season that I am eage to recommend with little reservation It will serve far beyond the season No realities of church life appea quite the same after one has read thi

WORSHIP IN WORD AND SACRAMENT. B *Ernest B. Koenker. Concordia $1.50. Paperback.*

A CLEAR if prosaic account of th way the preached Word and th sacraments are fused in Luthera worship, this is by an expert i matters of Roman Catholic liturgica reform. Occasioned in part by an inter est in proving that evangelical concer for the Eucharistic life and faith i no evidence of "Romanizing" inclina tions, it succeeds admirably. Muc or what Protestant liturgical faddist wish to borrow from the Roman Cath olic church, its own informed scholar are seeking to shed. Its essentia catholicity is sometimes limited by th author's habit of referring without ex planation to men and movement within his own branch of Lutheranism The book reveals the influence o the "Mystery" theology of Continenta Catholicism, but all its theme note were sounded first in Wittenberg.

THE IMAGE OF THE CITY. *By Charle Williams. Oxford. $6.00.*

CHARLES WILLIAMS was one o those writers who could not help but nourish a cult. Much of his lan guage was personal and private; he recalls to mind a Gerard Manley Hopkins. Much of his theological con cern seemed to be eccentric — though it never really was. The reader must approach him with a sense of patience until he is surprised by delight. But the delight always comes through, for Williams was a catholic and positive writer who himself delighted in crea tion and creating. A lengthy introduc tion by Anne Ridler will orient the new acquaintances to this wise man from England, and the collection of essays will suggest the scope of his thought. He can make sense of John Calvin, can show why childbirth and the Eucharist are the primal activities of earth and of church, can begin with a hopelessly prospectless theme and expose its glories. The title essays on "the city" are best, and will enlarge the world of all who despair of "the infamy" — which opposes the city. It will enlarge the vision for all of us of that city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God. That was the vision of witty and care ful and then dour and reckless Charles Williams, who was a realist, yet who always found himself on the side of creation, incarnation, and affirmation. I take hope from his achievement.

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REACHING FOR THE CHURCH. *By Richard R. Caemmerer. Concordia. $4.50.*

LEST there be any mistaking my orientation, let me admit that did not approach this book without rejudice in its favor. Having studied reaching under its author twelve ears ago, almost every line seemed o evoke memories of the classroom xperience. The memories were good; ie teacher and the teaching wear ell. Taken with H. Grady Davis' *)esign for Preaching* which appeared year ago and was reviewed in The ulpit in March, it goes a long way o explain why preaching in America's iird largest Protestant group, Luther-nism, is ordinarily not flashy but is raftsmanlike. Caemmerer and Davis re consistent: the preacher stands un-er the word. He is to proclaim, to each, to heal. Delight and imagina-on are brought in at this point, fter the Scripture has been listened o. The resultant sermons are not ie kind that one can advertise in ie newspapers on Saturday after-oon. But, if the lesson has been arned, they will be heard gladly. The format is obviously that of ie textbook, and the reader will e rewarded only to the degree that e submits to its discipline. There no levity, no spiraling in toward entral themes. The accents come om the goals right from the start: ie goals of faith, of life, of church, f family, of hope, of prayer. Self-riticism never stops. The reward? lever so much the satisfaction of hievement: the standard is too high. ut the attempt itself has been an spiration. And something of the ood news inevitably breaks through. reachers who stand in the tradition o which Caemmerer witnesses might ead this to see where they have fallen ort; those who stand outside it might e tantalized by the option it offers. is a systematic theology of preach-ng, the kind of book American Prot-stantism can use today.

REACHING: *The Art of Communication. By Leslie J. Tizard. Oxford. $2.25.*

WHAT this book suffers from its incompleteness (Mr. Tizard ied before his sequence of lectures n preaching had matured) it makes p in directness, personality and ointedness of intent. Preaching is ruth through personality," says the uthor, and he lives through his own it comes through on every page. ometimes the choice of illustration dated or quaint, but the thrust is ear. The person of the preacher is art of the revelatory constellation. nd then? Tizard quotes Dr. John Vatson: "As it now appears to me, ie chief effect of every sermon should e to unveil Christ, and the chief t of the preacher to conceal himself." h, yes, and the person on the other nd of the sermon? Mr. Tizard also new about him:

"There is no expeditious road
To pack and label men for God
And save them by the barrel-load."

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION. *By Edwin C. Blackman. Westminster. $3.00.*

IN THE face of Fundamentalism's legalizing of the Bible; against Roman Catholicism's literalizing and by-passing of the Book; against liberal criticism's evasions of its scandal Edwin Cyril Blackman argues from a consistent center. The Bible is Christo-centric. "The Gospel of our salvation is, in one word, Christ. Christ is, in the primary sense of the classic term, God's *Word*. The Bible is the Word of God in a secondary sense." But the Bible is organically related to the primary revelation and deserves higher regard than it gets from the legalizers, the literalizers, the evaders. At times Blackman argues for such a "high" view of the whole Scripture that he must rather ingeniously back-track from views such as those by L. S. Thornton, Austin Farrer, and Wilhelm Vischer. He wants their Christ-centered attachment to the whole book without their sophisticated glossing over some of the difficulties behind the idea of revelation in a verbal form, contained in a book written by men's hands.

A Marcion expert, Blackman devotes much of his work to a history or typology of biblical exegesis. Like much English biblical scholarship, his shows a good sense and an avoidance of extreme which is often lacking in the Continental "schoolish" counterparts. It neither professes to solve nor succeeds in solving many of the basic problems of interpretation today; but it cleans up much of the debris that stands in the way of solution. The historical baggage he carries is heavy, but his vehicle sustains it — and the reader — well.

SEX AND FAMILY IN THE BIBLE. *By Raphael Patai. Doubleday. $3.95.*

THIS is an off-beat record of ancient and modern Middle Eastern sex mores. Patai realizes that he is treading on eggs when he suggests that cultures twenty and more centuries removed carry sufficient continuity to illumine each other. Yet climatic, tribal, religious and traditional customs have served to nurture the main stalks. Patai takes twigs high and low, exposing them to view. Professing a desire to offend no religious people, his rather positivist approach to the more embarrassing side of the Holy Book may do just that here and there. It will serve a purpose for shaking up those who try to take middle class twentieth century marital and familial ethics and force the Bible, duly codified, into its mold for the sake of substantiation. It will serve to add peeps through tentholes of the patriarchs for the toms of a new day. (People make less fuss about vulgarities in the Bible than they did when infidels roamed the land.) And it may serve some constructive purpose here and there in enlarging our understanding of a world whose common life must constantly be opened to us. When it is all finished, however, many a reader may wonder with us why he bothered to read it all the way through. Did we really care that much?

M. E. M.

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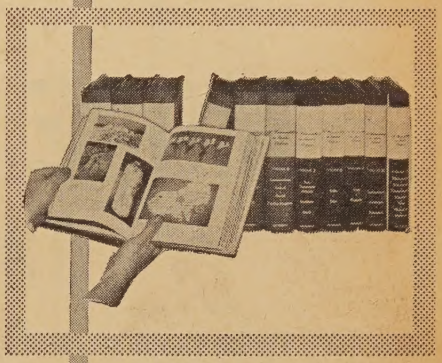

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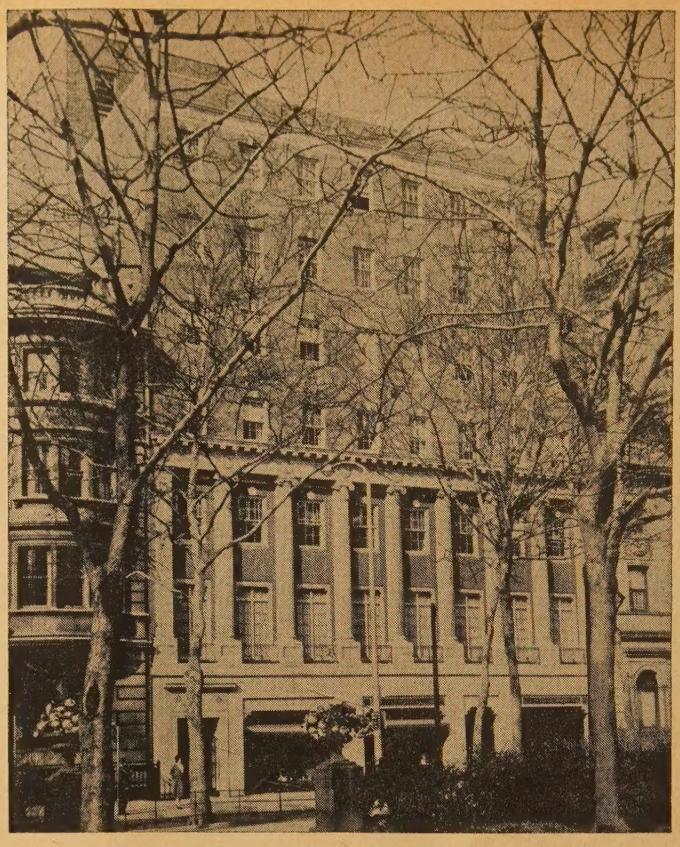

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